



Hi folks,

We are once again altering the publication dates of our Farmer Programs newsletter, reverting back to a bi-weekly release, so the info will be more timely and the size of the newsletters will be smaller. Here is the issue for March 5, 2021. If you're looking for back issues, please contact Nicolas Lindholm; also send any suggestions, corrections or advice regarding this newsletter to [nlindholm@mofga.org](mailto:nlindholm@mofga.org).

**Do you know anyone who might like to receive this newsletter?**

Send them this link:

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## The Farmer Programs Roundup

- This year's programming for our Journeyperson Program and Maine Farm Resilience Program has started. Welcome to all incoming JPs and MFRPs!
- We have begun piloting a scope-of-work model with farms requesting extensive technical assistance, working with them on production and financial projects. We have grant funding to provide this service and interested farms can fill out a [technical assistance request here](#).
- Planning continues for various upcoming programs including: Farm Training Projects, online Producer Meetings, a series of labor-related workshops, and the Farmer to Farmer Conference.
- For the Spring Growth Conference this year, we are hosting a Post-Harvest Handling and Food Safety six-week course with Atina Diffley – see "Events" below for more details.
- Work continues in developing an online course on Organic Practices & Principles of Livestock Health and Handling.
- This month, there will be several production, business, farm and orchard presentations given by our staff, as part of MOFGA-hosted programming, in addition to the Common Ground Radio feature on WERU FM Community Radio (89.9 FM and [weru.org](http://weru.org)) and a couple classes in the Maine AgrAbility Boots-to-Bushels course.
- We remain engaged in National Organic Coalition (NOC) and National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) conversations.
- The Maine Local Market Report, which we produced in collaboration with Maine Farmland Trust last year, is in its final stages of redesign, and we'll be looking to recruit both farmer and buyer respondents for this year over the next month or two.
- As always, please feel free to reach out to any Farmer Programs staff with questions about our work or suggestions for future projects or workshops. Visit this informational [handout](#) for staff contacts and to see what is in store for 2021!

## Events

- [Post-Harvest Handling and Food Safety Spring Growth Conference](#). Starting March 24, 2021. Hosted by MOFGA, this hands-on, produce safety class is spread over a six-week period, where farmers will be guided step-by-step through the process of writing a food safety plan. This course is for fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about on-farm produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and co-management of natural resources with food safety. Previous knowledge or experience is not necessary. Registration required. Free.
- [Compost Webinar Series](#) March 11, 23 & 30, 2021. Hosted by UMaine Cooperative Extension and the Maine Compost Team, this three-part series features presentations and Q&A opportunities on topics including: requirements and issues for use in certified

organic production systems, insights and issues in animal carcass composting, and observations and regulations for composting hemp residual. Registration required. Cost: \$10 per session or \$25 for all three.

- [Agricultural Water Management Board](#) virtual meeting. March 10, 2021. The Agricultural Water Management Board, a board of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), will be holding its first meeting virtually, and will allow members of the public to listen, view, and, when applicable, participate. This meeting will provide board members with an understanding of the purpose and history of the board, and will prepare the board to begin determining priority areas of focus and action. The agenda will include highlights of the 2020 Drought Task Force findings, a review of Department of Environmental Protection water withdrawal rules that affect agricultural water usage, and will allow a 10-minute public comment period.

## Educational Opportunities

- [Organic Seed Production](#) online course. Hosted by the Organic Seed Alliance, this six-month certificate program combines hands-on, farm-based independent study with online learning. The interactive, cohort-based course is designed to supplement an on-farm organic seed production training experience, and requires that enrolled students be simultaneously working or interning on a farm that grows seed or will allow the student space to grow seed. The six monthly modules focus on the biological, technical and economic aspects of organic seed production. Application deadline: March 10, 2021. Free.
- [Farm Succession Planning](#) webinar series. March 16, 23 & 30, 2021. Hosted by Land for Good, this three-part series is an opportunity for farmers and farm families to learn the basics of farm succession planning, how to get started, where to find advisors and additional resources, ask questions of succession planning experts, and get support on this challenging process. Registration required. Free.

## Marketing Opportunities

- [Become a vendor at the 2021 Common Ground Country Fair](#). Applications for different areas of the Fair are becoming available, with various deadlines for submission. Check the schedule and vendor resources, and plan for this year's event (which at this time is being planned for both in-person and online, with a final determination of possibly being online-only to be made in early May 2021).

## Resources

- [Smart Water Use on Your Farm](#) online resource database. Created by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, this new publication includes reports from on-farm SARE-funded research projects that focused on innovative conservation-oriented approaches to water use. Organized by soil management, plant management and water management categories, the reports cover topics including conservation tillage, cover crops, use of compost, crop rotation, low-volume irrigation, water recycling, and much more.
- [Cover Crop Support Tool](#) online resource. Developed by the Northeast Cover Crops Council, this new online tool provides guidance and information on over 35 species of plants, to help farmers find cover crop species that meet northeast farm conditions and goals. Currently, it includes search filters that can help select for Plant Hardiness Zone, plant type, environmental tolerance and more. In the future, this platform will host a variety of tools including a cover crop mixture and seeding rate calculator and an economics calculator.
- [Small Bites](#) – Practical Tips for Farm Resiliency. Five new posts are available: "Stress Adds Up and You Don't Have to Feel Alone" by Polly Shyka, "When Hiring a Manager, Clarity is Key" by Polly Shyka, "Activity Logs Help with Planning" by Polly Shyka, "Using Data to Plan for Labor for Next Season" by Polly Shyka, and "Can a Household Budget Clarify Your Farm Goals?" by Abby Sadauckas. These are short, informational articles offering practical ideas about stress reduction, improved communication and family well-being written by coaches from UMaine Cooperative Extension's farm coaching team.

## Opportunities for Farmer Input

- ["Harvest Maine"](#) video interview series. The Maine DACF is looking for farmers interested in participating in a new series of recorded videos promoting Maine agriculture. You must be a Real Maine member with first-hand experience in Maine agriculture, and willing to showcase your work to help people learn why agriculture matters. The series of casual video interviews will launch later this spring, and will feature farmers, growers and producers who work to make a variety of Maine agricultural products available and accessible year-round. Respond by April 1, 2021.
- Are you a northeast farmer who has used the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to fund conservation work on your farm? Or tried unsuccessfully to use CSP? The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) would love to hear about your experience. They will be hosting an online farmer listening session in March featuring a small panel of farmers, who will be compensated for their participation, and are especially hoping to highlight the stories of BIPOC, women, LGBTQ, small-scale and diversified farmers. They will use the information from this session to improve program outreach and advocate for changes in the next Farm Bill. If you're interested, please contact Ariana Taylor-Stanley: [ariana@sustainableagriculture.net](mailto:ariana@sustainableagriculture.net) or 206-660-8958.

## MOFGA Employment Opportunities

- [Seasonal Staff Inspector](#) MOFGA Certification Services, LLC (MCS) is hiring a seasonal organic staff inspector to work in conjunction with MCS's certification staff to conduct organic inspections throughout our service area (primarily in Maine). This position will be active from April through October. Staff inspectors provide high-quality customer service along with skilled inspection auditing and verification to support positive organic certification experiences for Maine's organic producers. To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to [certification@mofga.org](mailto:certification@mofga.org).
- [Community Engagement Coordinator](#) MOFGA is hiring a full-time year-round community engagement coordinator. Responsibilities involve cultivating MOFGA community engagement, with special emphasis on supporting the organization's membership and volunteer base, and facilitating community participation in MOFGA's operations, programs and events, including the Common Ground Country Fair. To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to [kgreen@mofga.org](mailto:kgreen@mofga.org).

