



Hi folks,

This is our Farmer Programs Newsletter for July 23, 2021. With summer in full swing, there are a lot of things to keep on top of — hopefully you get a chance to look through the resources and opportunities listed here, because they could make a difference for you! 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).

## The Farmer Programs Roundup

- We are looking for speakers for the following sessions for our Farmer to Farmer Conference, if you think you would be a great fit please contact Anna Mueller directly at [amueller@mofga.org](mailto:amueller@mofga.org).
  - **Farm Efficiencies in the Pack Shed & FSMA** — Have you recently completed a pack shed renovation and have loads of time on your hands as a result of all the efficiency gains? Banging your head against the wall literally and figuratively because of the current pack shed layout? Have you made a small change to your wash/pack routine that has had a huge impact? We're setting the foundation for a session at the MOFGA Farmer to Farmer in November and would love to find five to six farms to share their experiences as an introductory panel ahead of a larger farmer-to-farmer sharing session.
  - **Keeping Your Equipment and Tools Clean** — Got your cleaning and sanitizing SOPs totally dialed in? Or are you cringing every time you look at your wash line? Got a favorite tool or piece of equipment that is just plain easy to clean and efficient and life changing? We're gearing up for a session at the MOFGA Farmer to Farmer in November and would love to find five to six farms to share their experiences as an introductory panel ahead of a larger farmer-to-farmer sharing session.
  - **Tunnel Management for Temperature and Humidity Control** — Are you and your plants totally comfortable in your tunnels? Or are you all stressed out from the heat, humidity or management of them? Have you experimented with different passive ventilation methods? Got a good routine, schedule, and decision tree in your head for how and when to ventilate? Done everything you can think of and still see molds and mildews? We're looking to add some fresh air to this conversation in a session at the MOFGA Farmer to Farmer in November and would love to find five to six farms to share their experiences as an introductory panel ahead of a larger farmer-to-farmer sharing session.
- 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 going on in 2021!

## Educational Opportunities

- **Farmer to Farmer in the Field: Irrigation** — July 26, 5:30-7 p.m. at Goranson Farm in Dresden. Goranson Farm utilizes a diverse array of irrigation systems including drip, overhead rain birds, hose reels, and 3-to-6-inch pumps to meet crop and farm needs. They look forward to sharing their strategies for each system. Over the years Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) irrigation projects have included wells, a

recently completed in-ground hydrant system, and pump purchases. Park in front of the farmstand by the white Goranson Farm sign. Address: 250 River Road, Dresden, Maine 04342. Free.

## Resources

- Currently, members of the Maine farming community are grieving the death of a beginning farmer, and we wanted to share resources to support farmer stress and mental health.
  - Maine Statewide Crisis and Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-888-568-1112
  - [Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Northeast](#) Resources
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - Crisis Text Line: Text "CONNECT" to 741741
  - [Maine Agricultural Mediation Program](#)
  - [Recognizing the Signs of Farm Family Stress](#)
  - [UMaine AgrAbility Resources](#)
  - [FarmAid Crisis Support](#) — available Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)
  - 3-minute [Farm Stress video](#)
  - [Two-part podcast](#) from the National Young Farmers Coalition that tells the story of people coming together after a tragic loss in the farming community of Washington state
- [Online Soil Report Revision and Reprinting](#) resource tool. Maine Soil Testing Services recently created this web-based tool where you can look up past soil test reports to review, reprint and/or change the crop code for the report. If you've lost past soil test results or want results for a different crop than what you initially requested, this self-serve tool is a quick and easy way to get that information.
- [Second Specialty Crop Block Grant](#) announced. Administered by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), a new round of grant applications is now open thanks to further funds made available through the USDA. The Specialty Crop Block grant program is specifically designed to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops which include fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops and floriculture. The priority areas identified for this round are: projects that make certain facility adjustments to protect employees and the public from potential COVID-19 exposure, projects that implement market adaptation related to COVID-19 and that benefit a variety of businesses, and projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Agricultural organizations, educational institutions, commodity groups, municipalities, producers and state agencies are eligible to apply. Application deadline: August 17, 2021.
- [Single Use Plastic Bag Ban](#) informational bulletin. Created by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), this short webpage provides an overview of Maine's new single-use plastic bag ban ([38 MRSA §1611](#)) which the department began enforcing on July 1, 2021. The DEP is specifically reaching out to farmers to help address and clarify how the ban affects the bagging of loose items like fruits and vegetables. Here is their synopsis:

"The plastic bag reduction law requires any carry-out bag provided by retailers to be either a recycled paper bag or a reusable bag and requires a 5-cent (or greater) fee for recycled paper carry-out bags and on any reusable carry-out bags that are made from plastic. However, bags used to protect or contain certain items are exempt and may be provided at no cost, including: Bags used by customers inside a retail establishment to package loose items, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, coffee, grains, bakery goods, candy, greeting cards or small hardware items; to contain or wrap frozen foods, meats or fish; or to contain or wrap flowers or potted plants. Bags without handles used to protect items from being damaged or from damaging or contaminating other purchased items placed in a recycled paper bag or a reusable bag.

These exemptions allow the use of single-use bags (paper or plastic) to contain loose items, including produce. Although the law specifically states 'bags used by customers...,' the department also understands that many times farm stand staff need to bag loose items for

customers for sanitary reasons, convenience of purchase (such as prepacking a set amount of produce for sale), or for weighing items to calculate price. There is no quantity or weight limit for loose items; loose items can range from a few ounces of herbs to 10 pounds of peas, a dozen ears of corn, or a peck of apples. Bags used for collecting, weighing, and protecting loose items are exempted from the requirements specific to carry-out bags, including the 5-cent fee.

However, if an additional bag is used to contain one or more bags of loose produce, the bag in which the other bags are placed is considered a carry-out bag. All carry-out bags must meet the requirements of a reusable bag or recycled paper bag, and a 5-cent fee must be charged for each recycled paper carry-out bag and any reusable carry-out bag that is made of plastic. If a bag containing loose items is carried away without being placed inside another bag, the bag containing loose items is still considered an exempted bag and no fee is required."

## Opportunities for Farmer Input

- **Health Survey for Maine Women in Agriculture.** Administered by Maine AgrAbility, this short survey is for Maine women involved in production agriculture and is designed to identify topics of interest and gaps in educational resources related to women's physical, mental and cognitive health. The survey addresses the state of your body and how well it is working, your psychological and emotional well-being, and your ability to think, learn and remember while performing everyday activities. Based on the results of the survey, Maine AgrAbility intends to share and/or develop resources to meet the needs of Maine women involved in agriculture. Survey deadline: October 1, 2021.
- **Maine Farm to Institution Leadership Team** accepting applications. Maine Farm to Institution (MEFTI) is actively looking for individuals to join their leadership team and welcomes anyone (this includes farmers!) involved in or supporting food work at Maine healthcare facilities, universities, correctional facilities, schools, early care sites or other food-serving institutions to apply. Stipends are available to support leadership team members' work. In the coming year, MEFTI will be working on statewide policy advocacy, advancing priorities developed through the 2020-2021 Maine Food Convergence, and more. Application deadline: July 30, 2021.
- **New England Vegetable Management Guide** user survey. The authors and editors of the New England Vegetable Management Guide recently decided to hold off on updating and publishing the new edition of the guide until 2022, to coincide with the next in-person New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference, and that therefore this was a good opportunity to get some input from the users of the guide to inform future revisions. If you use this guide, please take this five-minute survey to help the authors learn more about how the guide is used and how they can make the next edition as useful as possible. Survey deadline: September 2021.
- **Plant a row for MOFGA!** MOFGA's Common Kitchen is seeking donations of organically raised food to support our events, including feeding Common Ground Country Fair volunteers this fall. Please consider planting a row of carrots, cabbage, onions, dry beans or other vegetables you're eager to grow. We are accepting donations of honey and maple syrup too. Reach out to Common Kitchen Manager and Fair Food Liaison Wendy Watson at [wwatson@mofga.org](mailto:wwatson@mofga.org) if you have any questions. And if you do plant a row, let us know on our Facebook page or use the hashtag #plantarowformofga on Instagram.

Do you know anyone who might like to receive this newsletter?  
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7/23/2021

Constant Contact

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