



NO FARMERS, NO FOOD!

SEARCH FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Are you looking to change your current job for a career in the field of Agriculture? The Rhode Island Farm Bureau is seeking a dynamic, people oriented, organized individual to fill a new position in our office. The Public Relations Specialist/Executive Director that we seek will be responsible for day to day operation of the office, getting the Farm Bureau's name out to the public, membership recruitment, among various other duties. Qualifications include good communication skills, ability to run computer programs, available to attend meetings in the evening and weekend duties.

A large portion of this position will be the organization of an Ag in the Classroom program. Interested individuals should forward a cover letter and resume to rifarm@rifb.org.

SHEEP FARM FEATURED IN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

Debra Hopkins, owner of Hopkins Southdown Farm in North Scituate was recently featured in *Providence Business News (PBN)*.

"The emergence of RI as a haven for chefs and farm-to-table restaurants has contributed to steady growth for Hopkins Southdowns" PBN stated. They primarily produce lamb for consumption in restaurants.

Southdowns , an old English sheep, is

RIFB POSITION ON FSMA

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is causing RI Farmers a great deal of angst. Many farmers are asking what the RI Farm Bureau is doing? We have taken the position that we would like enforcement of FSMA to be under the control of local state agriculture departments. However, we really do not think anything is going to happen until the Trump Administration has all its "players" in position.

Shortly after the Secretary of Environment was appointed, President Trump issued executive orders that benefited our Farmers nationwide. We believe that once we have a new Secretary of Agriculture there may be executive orders issued to reduce/eliminate the impact of FSMA rules. Stay tuned.

prized for its marbled meat, which produces a tender, mild flavored lamb. Hopkins Southdowns maintains a herd of about 80 breed ewes and five stud rams with as many as 100 lambs at any one time. The lambs are raised on the farm's twelve open acres of pasture until they are processed at licensed off-site facilities.

Although the farm participates in weekly farmer's markets, it reaches many of its clients through Farm Fresh RI. The farm has the product delivered to Farm Fresh and they distribute it to individual restaurants.

The business has grown steadily for several years.

STRONG FOOD SYSTEM SUPPORTS RI ECONOMY

Last Spring, as part of her efforts to grow RI's green economy and support healthy families, Gov. Raimondo announced the hiring of the state's (and nation's) first Director of Food Strategy, Sue AnderBois, to lead the development of RI's first comprehensive food plan.

The RI Food Strategy, designed to be a five-year action plan, takes a holistic view of the state's food system, breaking it into three core components: Production, Health and access and Economic Development—and examining how each component interrelates (such as farming or fisheries).

The Strategy sets forth five focus areas:

- 1) Alleviate Food Insecurity and Hunger
- 2) Make Food Production More Accessible
- 3) Create, Sustain and Grow Markets
- 4) Prioritize Environmental and Econ. Stability
- 5) Create, Sustain Climate for Food Businesses

Some facts about our food sector. Our food sector employs over 60,000 jobs. RI leads the nation in the number of public schools that participate in the local food movement. Over 100 million pounds of seafood were landed in RI with an export of over \$1 billion. RI's food scene has been touted by the NY Times, Zagat, Thrillist, GQ, BuzzFeed and more. Over \$2 billion in food sales was captured in local restaurants in 2016.

How has agriculture touched your life today?

FARM BUREAU OFFICE AVAILABLE FOR MEETINGS.

The RI Farm Bureau office is quite central by RI standards (West Greenwich Coventry Town Line) and is available free of charge for meetings or gatherings for ag-related organizations who are Farm Bureau Members. We have two rooms available. Our main area can comfortably hold 50 people and the bottom office can hold up to 15 people. Please call the FB office in advance.

SUBURBAN PROPANE

For members who have Suburban Propane; our discount with them is temporarily suspended. We are in contact with the local manager and he has indicated that he would like to renew the contract we had with them. We hope to have this long standing and favorite benefit back as quickly as possible.

LEGISLATION

RI Farm Bureau has hired FS Capitol Consulting to do our lobbying for us this year.

With offices located in Washington, D.C. and Providence, Rhode Island, FS Capitol is a consulting firm specializing in federal and state government relations.

They have over 20 years of experience in planning, coordinating and implementing dynamic and agile government relations strategies for companies, trade and professional organizations and other entities in the legislative, executive and regulatory arenas at the state and federal level.

They are currently tracking over 37 bills for us with more to follow.

Highlights of bills being tracked: H-5605 the perennial chicken bill by Rep. Serpa (D). S-60 which provide immunity to person who provide food to a food pantry or food bank by Sen. Morgan (R) Several bills that raise the exemption on inherited land to \$5million or more. S-307 would regulate the transport of firewood in RI by Morgan. Certain bills on Carbon Pricing.

See page 4 for details.

WRIGHT PARTICIPATES IN ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

RIFB President Henry Wright traveled to Washington, DC to participate in the American Farm Bureau Advocacy Conference. This conference gives Farm Bureau leaders, members and staff the opportunity to attend interactive workshops and in-depth training sessions, while networking with Farm Bureau leaders from across the country who share a passion for agricultural advocacy.

Participants in the conference visited their congressional delegations to discuss issues of concern on national, regional and state issues. President Wright sat down with all four congressional delegates, Reed, Cicilline, Whitehouse and Langevin and their staff members to discuss many of Rhode Islands' pressing issues. Henry spent a great deal of time making the delegates aware of how the Food Safety and Modernization Act is hurting RI Farmers and farmers throughout the United States. There was much discussion regarding the Farm Bill and the provisions regarding dairy; one of the most stressed of our Agricultural businesses here in RI and throughout the nation. Other topics included child nutrition and other programs like WIC, Food Stamps, etc., which represent over 80% of the cost of the Farm Bill. Immigration provisions for temporary workers needed by farmers was another part of the dialog during Henry's time on capitol hill. Although the Advocacy Conference is only one time per year, President Wright is often in Washington on behalf of our members, keeping our Representatives advised on all Ag related issues here in Rhode Island.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN 4-H IN RI

Rhode Island 4-H is for you!! We have many programs, projects and opportunities for youth age 5-18 and great opportunities for volunteerism for adults. Please explore our programs, projects and we hope you decide to join and start your 4-H experience!

Here is an activity going on in the near future.

2017 4-H Photo Fine Arts Fair Rhode Island. This event is open to all 4-H members (8-18 as of 1/1/17), who are currently enrolled in a 4-H club. Since this is a competitive state event, there is no category for Cloverbuds.

For more information about 4-H go to <http://web.uri.edu/4h/>

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU AND 4-H

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 12, 2016 – Leaders of National 4-H Council and the American Farm Bureau Federation today announced a newly established partnership during the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two groups. Recognizing the need to support agricultural education and highlight the impact ag plays in our daily lives, National 4-H Council and AFBF aim to ignite the desire of young people to embrace agriculture, cultivate innovation and empower them with opportunities to improve the world around them. Through collaboration on thought leadership and ag literacy initiatives, both organizations are committed to better link young people to agriculture of today and tomorrow.

“Farm Bureau has a long history of investing in young people with a demonstrated interest in not only farming and ranching but also agri-business and food-related careers,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “We’re pleased to build on our tradition of supporting youth in agriculture through this formal collaboration with National 4-H Council.”

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Bill Number	Sponsor	Description	RIFB Pos	Status
H-5160	Lima	Can't declaw animal unless vet ok	Neutral	HFS
S-60	Morgan	Immunity people give foodbank, kitchen	Support	HFS
H5235	Ucci	Estate Tax Credit of \$5,490,000	Support	Finance Committee
H-5285	Morgan	Estate Tax Credit of \$5million	Support	Finance Committee
H-5344	Hearn	Maintenance of rights of way	Support	HFS
H-5386	Filippi	Allows non-vets to perform certain tasks	Support	HFS
S-247	Kettle	Handling and saleraw milk	Support	Environment
H5470	Shekarchi	Allows non-vets to perform certain tasks	Support	HFS
S-307	Morgan	Regulates transportation of firewood in RI	Oppose?	Environment
S-365	Calkin	Carbon Pricing Act of 2017 (H5369 Regunberg)	Oppose	HFS
H-5605	Serpa	Chicken Cage bill. Increase size of cages	Oppose?	Environment
H-5772	Fogarty	Exempt plants and seeds from sales tax	Support (ours)	Finance
S-448	Sosnowski	Exempt plants and seeds from sales tax	Support (ours)	Finance
H-5815	Handy	Regulate wood stoves	Amend	Environment
S-451, 467	Felag, Gallo	Raise estate tax exemptions	Support	Finance
H-5882	Ackerman	Hoarding of animals is cruelty	Amend	HEW
S-5540	Marszalkowski (DEM)	Animal Control Officer to Rabies	Support	Passed House
S-481	McCaffrey	Shorten decision making for land develop.	Support	Finance
H-5551	Canario	Create commission to study marijuana	OK	Judiciary

WORKING WITH YOUR WOODS TO HELP WILDLIFE

The RI Resource Conservation and Development Area Council is offering an opportunity for up to 25 woodland owners to become RI Coverts Project Cooperators. They are now seeking applicants to participate in our Annual Coverts Training Workshop. The RI Coverts Project 2017 is a program designed to promote sound forest management practices that can make wildlife healthier, more diverse and abundant. This workshop will focus on the conservationist need to promote young forest habitat to meet the habitat requirements of many wildlife species.

“Take the training—you will never think about wildlife the same again.”

May 12 &13 Camp Canonicus, Exeter RI. May 17, 2017 URI Computer Lab Kingston, RI.

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