

NEWSLETTER

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Being a member of the RIFB means more savings, more discounts, and even more benefits. Listed below are a few of our newest discounts offered to you, our members to help you save \$\$. Our newest benefit is a discount of \$300-\$500 from CASE IH TRACTOR and other Case farm equipment. Contact the RIFB office to get this discount.

In addition to the \$500 GM discount, The New GM True Car Program is now available. The GM True Car program is an online program where you can get a quote for a GM vehicle and save as much as \$2,500 in addition to your \$500 GM discount for being a RIFB Member. Simply go to foverify.com, type in your membership number and zip code and get a quote on a new or used vehicle. Take the quote to your favorite GM dealer and buy the vehicle.

If you are not signed up for RETAIL BENEFITS PROGRAM, then you are missing out on some real online shop-



Case IH is the latest benefit for RIFB Members

ping discounts. Go to rifarmbureau.foryourpeople.com to save hundreds of dollars at thousands of companies nationwide. Additionally, you and the RI Farm Bureau will get cash back when you shop. Make sure you download the Shopping Assistant.

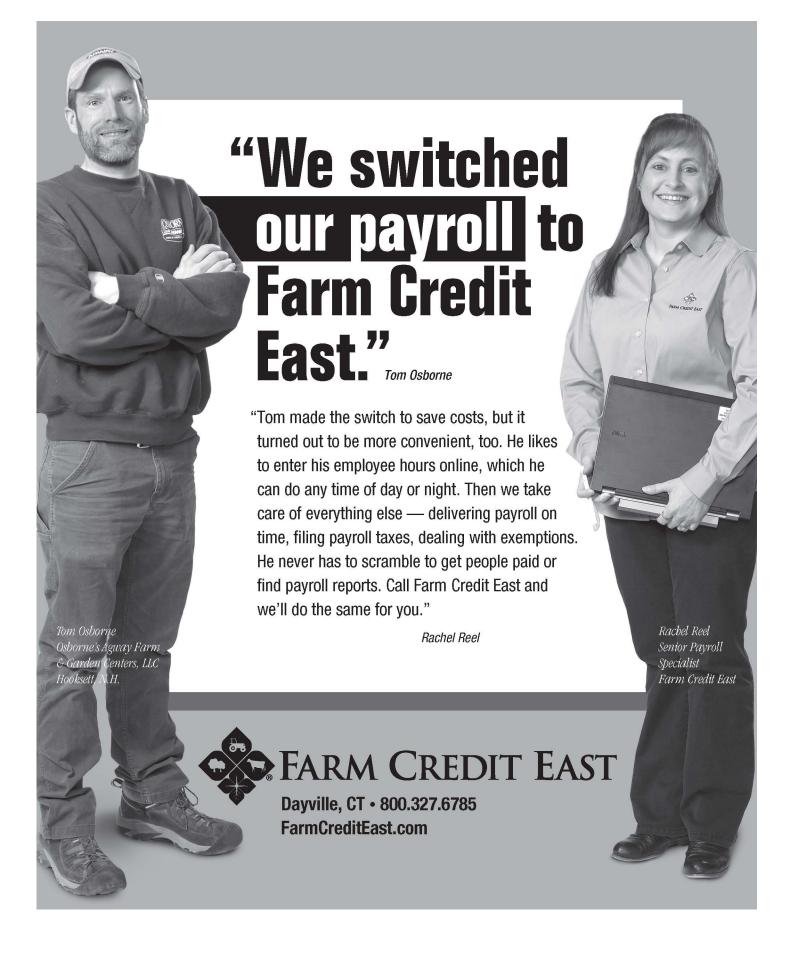
Save money on heating your home by using Superior Plus 401-467-6510, HOP Energy 800-951-2941 or Suburgan Propane, 401-397-3311.

Looking for more ways to save, go to our web site <u>rifb.org</u>, click on Membership information, then Membership Benefits and click the Access Benefits link. Here you can print out coupons at over 300,000 companies nationwide.

LOGO CONTEST

Wanted – talented, artist type person, capable of designing the Newest RIFB Logo. There is a \$100 prize to the person who submits the winning entry. The winner will be featured in our newsletter. Help us celebrate our 60 th year in business, by creating a

one of a kind work of art. Email your entries to rifarm@aol.com or mail it to the RIFB office. Deadline is March 21. The current logo is in the upper left hand corner of this page.



ESTATE TAX ISSUE GAINS STEAM

Farmers Seek Tax Relief

By TIM FAULKNER/ecoRI News staff

PROVIDENCE — Several generations of farmers spoke in favor of a bill (S 18) to help reduce the tax burden for passing land to family members.

Bill Stamp Jr. of Stamp Farms in Cranston and North Kingstown noted that agriculture is a small but growing industry in the state, but most farmers are getting older. "Agriculture is gaining, but now we have to pass it on to the next generation."

"We want to continue doing what we do best," his son Bill Stamp III said at the Jan. 29 Statehouse hearing. Under current state law the first \$1 million of farmland is appraised as agricultural use, which is lower than the "full and fair-cash value" or its value as new homes or commercial real estate.

"If we keep appraising our farmland as house lots, you know what's going to happen? They are going to become house lots," said Alfred Bettencourt Jr., executive director of the Rhode Island Farm Bureau.

After the hearing, Ken Ayars, chief of the state Division of Agriculture, said state officials have taken an interest in the issue and are studying the tax implications. The governor is expected to make an announcement on this and related bills as the legislative session moves ahead, he said.

Ayars noted that as much as 10 percent of Rhode Island is farmland, much of it valuable coastal property and

sought after by real-estate developers. "Farmers are typically land rich and cash poor, so sometimes they have to sell the land to pay taxes," he said.

To help farmers plan for estate tax issues, the Division of Agriculture is co-hosting a tax workshop for farmers in early March.

David Cotta, 71, co-owner of Quonset View Farm in Portsmouth, hopes the taxes will be lowered before he bequeaths his 140-acre farm to his grandson Mike Flynn, an agricultural student at the University of Rhode Island. Cotta was one of several farmers who noted that the pay can be poor, but the work is rewarding. "We really need agriculture in Rhode Island and the country. It's a wonderful thing," he said. But help is needed for family farming to endure. "Without this bill it will put me behind the eight ball," Flynn said.

Tyler Young, of Young Family Farm in Little Compton said he buys used farm equipment, which he repairs himself. Fertilizers are expensive, he said. And crops like his potatoes have good years and bad. "We just don't want to get to the point where we can't function," he said.

The bill was held for further study by the Senate Finance Committee. *Editor's Note:* However, Senator Felag moved passage and several senators agreed. But Chairman DaPonte held it and asked Al Bettencourt to get more info from the Sales Tax Division as to how much it would cost. Since 2009, no farmers have paid an estate tax. Stay tuned.



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RICAPE PRODUCES TRAINING VIDEOS

RICAPE and its Director Stu Nunnery have completed a six part series of training video programs for farmers engaged in agritourism. Written and hosted by Nunnery, the videos were produced in partnership with First Priority Media of Cranston and funded through a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) and a Specialty Crop Block Grant – both from USDA. The series will be launched February 27th in a workshop hosted by Nunnery at the Harvest New England Ag Marketing Conference and Trade Show to be held in Sturbridge, MA. In March the videos will be available on the New England FarmWays website and via other broadcast sources along with other webbased materials to assist farm operators to launch or expand their agritourism destinations and enterprises.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment." Will Rogers

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." CS Lewis
"A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful
than a life spent doing nothing." George Bernard Shaw

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." Winston Churchill

"A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him." David Brinkley

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Henry Ford

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FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Dod Fresh Doubles RI Grown PRODUCE FROM 2011 TO 2012!

Rhode Island Grown produce amounts in the DoD Fresh program doubled from the 2011 harvest to the 2012 harvest.

Between September and December of 2011, RI schools received about \$15,000 in RI Grown produce through the program, compared to about \$31,000 for the same time frame in 2012, as reported by the US Department of Defense.

AT Siravo of Cranston, the contracted vendor for the DoD Fresh program in the New England region, sourced RI Grown apples from Pippin Orchards and RI Grown vegetables from Confreda Farms.

Sales Tax on Plants

There seems to be some confusion on whether or not farmers should collect a sales tax on vegetable plants. The answer is YES!

However, if you sell the plants to a fellow farmer who has a sales tax exempt certificate, you do not have to collect the tax.

KIDS FIRST BIDS A "FUND" FAREWELL TO RI FARM TO SCHOOL



Kids First, Rhode Island Farm to School's first home and launch pad, officially closed in June of 2012. RI Farm to School started as an idea there in 1999, and over the course of twelve years grew to include education and cafeteria programs in all 36 public school districts. When Kids First achieved it's mission to "Guide Communities to Improve the Nutritional and Physical Well Being of Children and Their Families", on-going pro-

grams transitioned to other agencies and non-profits. RI Farm to School was adopted by Farm Fresh RI, Rhode Island's premier agricultural advocacy organization.

Kids First recently bequeathed a gift of \$10,000 to Farm Fresh RI's Farm to School project. The funds shall be used for classroom education programs, cafeteria celebrations of locally grown foods, after school programs, gardening programs and farm field trips. Thank you Kids First, for nurturing a program that supports health of RI farms, students, our communities and environments!

Check out Farm Fresh RI's new Farm to School website for more information.

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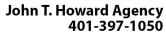
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NO FARMERS NO FOOD

'TIS THE SEASON: FARM EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY

By Carol S. Roberts

As spring planting nears, it's important to make sure your farm equipment is in top working condition. Having a breakdown can be costly in two important ways: the bill for replacing the broken part(s) and the time lost in the field. There are certain precautions a farmer can take before, during and after the season to keep equipment in optimum working condition, such as conducting a pre-season maintenance review or taking equipment to a local dealer for inspection.

Performing regular maintenance will not always prevent breakdowns in the field, but by following these suggestions, you can make them less likely.

- Read the operator's manual.
- Conduct maintenance properly.
- Keep electrical connections dry and free of debris.
- Do not overestimate the operating capacity of your equipment.
- Replace worn parts before they become broken parts.
- Store equipment in appropriate shelters.
- Do not let an untrained person operate the equipment.
- Do not ignore warning signals that say something is wrong.
- Try not to operate machinery in less than optimal weather conditions, which can put a real strain on the equipment.

It's also critical to complete maintenance in a safe manner. Remember the following:

- Avoid improper lifting.
- Keep all tools in good working condition.
- Take extra precaution when making hydraulic system repairs. Use paper or cardboard, not a hand, to find a leak
- Use the right tool for the right job.
- Make sure all equipment is turned off and stabilized and that chocks are placed under the wheels to prevent rolling.
- Never climb under a vehicle or piece of equipment on a jack unless it is properly secured with blocks or jackstands.
- Pay extra attention to heavy or sharp objects. They're essential to farming operations but can cause serious bodily harm.
- Make sure all tools have proper safety shields.
- · Keep the work area clean, and practice safe habits when working.
- · Wear protective clothing and safety gear.
- Train family members and workers to have safe work habits.
- Educate novices helping with repairs and maintenance prior to their participation.

And remember, do not hurry. Most accidents happen when people rush and do not think through what they are about to do. Take the time to consider safety and you could reduce your risk of loss or injury. Go to www.farmfamily.com and look at our loss control section for more information on implementing risk management and safety in the workplace.

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Our relationship with the Rhode Island Farm Bureau has evolved since 1954, when a farsighted group of farmers decided to form an insurance company by farmers, for farmers. Our leaders continue to work together to address the needs of farmers in the state. Locally, our agents support Farm Bureau members, learning the issues in their farming communities firsthand.

Thank you for making Farm Family your insurer of choice. Together, we will work to protect your farms, business, family and homes.

Contact your local Farm Family office or call:

Richard Brock **General Agent** (860) 329-0103



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Committee

Status

Description

5036	Walsh	Appraise farmland as farmland	Finance	Introduced 1/9	Pro
18	Felag			Senate 1/29	Ours
76	Sosnowski	Allow Animal Ag in all zones	Housing and Mu-	Introduced 1/16	Pro
	Naughton		nicipal Govt		Ours
22	O'Neil	Increase estate tax exemption to \$2mil	Finance	Introduced	Pro
24	O'Neil	Trade in value of pick-up	Finance	Introduced	Pro
65	Bates	Make the \$850,000 an exemption rather than threshold	Finance	Introduced	Pro
71	Kettle	Repeal Min Corp Tax	Finance	Introduced	Pro
81	Felag	Increase Estate Tax exemption to \$1.5mil	Finance	Introduced	Pro
88	Walaska	Reduce Corp Min Tax to \$250	Finance	Introduced	Pro
5030	McLaugh- lin				
5115	Ucci	Reduce Min Corp Tax to \$50.	Finance	Introduced	Pro
5135	Baldelli- Hunt	Extend farm to school tax credit to milk.	Finance	Introduced	Pro
121	Walaska	Regulate outdoor boilers	Environ &Ag	Introduced	Con?
5190	Nunes	Sell wine at Farmer's Markets	Corporations	Hearing	Pro
				Feb 5	
5278	Hull	Label GMO	HEW	Introduced 2/6	Con
5407	Ruggerio	Increase fees for commercial feeds	Finance	Introduced	??
5431	Skekarchi	Animal Rights Groups guardians of animals.	Judiciary	Introduced	Con?