



RI Farm Bureau

Volume 16 Number 2

April 28, 2015

NEWSLETTER

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RI FARM BUREAU SPONSORS 100TH FARM EVENT

The RI Farm Bureau sponsored the celebration of the purchase of development rights on the 100th farm in the state which was held at Hope and Main in Warren, RI. Governor Raimondo addressed the group.

The state of RI Ag Land Preservation Commission recently purchased the development rights on the Lial farm in the town of Warren. Ironically, the first farm development rights that were purchased was the Chase farm which is also in Warren. The development rights for the Lial farm were purchased for \$385,000 for 40.5 acres or \$9.6 thousand per acre. In 1985, the development rights on the Chase farm (142 acres) were purchased for \$425,880 or \$3 thousand per acre. The most recent purchase of development rights was on the Bettencourt farm in Tiverton where the development rights were sold on the 59 acre farm for \$495,000 or \$8,389 per acre. Development rights on a 42 acre farm on Block Island were sold in 2013 for \$4.1 million or close to \$98,000 per



Governor Raimondo addressed the group.

acre.

The purchase of development rights is usually a collaborative effort between the federal government (USDA), state government and local land trusts.

NO FARMERS NO FOOD!

WE'RE ON TV

Don't forget, RI Farm Bureau has a TV show called [RI Farm Watch](#). The times and channels of the show are listed below. Let us know if you would like to feature your farm on our show.

Full Channel and Cox Channel 13 Weds at 3:30

Verizon Tues 4:30, Thurs 3:00 Fri 7:00 pm Sat 10:00 am – all on Channel 30

Channel 18 in Johnston on the Verizon days and time.



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For more information, watch our video at FarmCreditEast.com/Payroll.

FARM FRESH RI PLANNING A HARVEST OF THE MONTH CAMPAIGN

Farm Fresh RI is planning a Harvest of the Month campaign! With input from school food purchasers in RI school districts and RI farmers, we are developing a promotional campaign for use in cafeterias all over the state. One to two RI Grown items will be highlighted each month between September and February, depending on availability and abundance of the harvest. Farm Fresh will provide cafeterias with point of sale marketing materials including posters and stickers. We will send newsletters to purchasers one month in advance to provide information on product availability, sources, recipe suggestions and educational materials. Farm Fresh aims to include every RI K-12 school cafeteria in this promotion. We will also reach out to RI hospitals, colleges, universities, senior centers and pre-schools to encourage their participation.

During the Annual Farm to School Stakeholders Meeting on March 30, school food purchasers, their produce distributors and Tyler Young (the only RI farmer in attendance) discussed the best items to feature each month of the campaign. Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator Kimberly Clark will reach out to RI farmers who participate in RI Farm to School to raise awareness of our Harvest of the Month campaign this spring. As the growing season progresses, we will seek farmers input on the best items to highlight during specific months. In the meantime, our Harvest of the Month materials will be developed and printed. This promotion is one way that RI Farm to School is encouraging cafeteria purchasers to look to RI growers first when seeking fresh produce to serve in schools.

As a project of Farm Fresh RI, we are working to grow a local food system that values the environment, health and quality of life of Rhode Island farmers and eaters. Farm Fresh RI's Harvest of the Month project is generously supported by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant.

If you have questions or comments on the Harvest of the Month campaign, please contact Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator Kim Clark at kimclark@farmfreshri.org or 401 312- 4250



The 12 RI Grown items included in Harvest of the Month

Apples
Potatoes
Tomatoes
Zucchini/Squash
Cucumbers
Peppers
Broccoli
Carrots
Butternut
Lettuce
Peaches/Stone Fruit
Fresh Herbs



FARMERS AND RANCHERS ARE TIRED OF EPA DOUBLETALK

BY BOB STALLMAN

Business owners around the country have joined with farmers and ranchers in speaking out on the Waters of the U.S. rule. More than 30 states also oppose the rule. Yet, even in the face of mounting opposition, the EPA still isn't listening.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy has unveiled her latest, campaign-style WOTUS spin, calling the effort the "Clean Water Rule."

Our biggest objection, in fact, is not about clean water. It's about land.

McCarthy insists that the rule will allow business as usual for agriculture. She has said farmers and ranchers won't need special permits "to go about their business." But what she's saying just doesn't match up with the language of the rule. Anyone who's been out on farmland knows that water collects in spots that aren't regular water sources for anything else, let alone major streams and rivers.

Prairie potholes are a good example of the "waters" the EPA is targeting. These isolated wetlands are sprinkled across the Upper Midwest and Northern Plains. By pooling these isolated features together, the Waters of the U.S. rule would let the agencies treat them as a "significant nexus" to streams and rivers – an idea that's simply not supported by law or common sense. Together, the prairie potholes in a region could be treated just like a large body of water, even though the end result would be more control over land, not water – something that Congress never intended.

Rather than recognizing the careful stewardship that farmers and ranchers practice, EPA keeps forcing farmers and ranchers back on the defensive. McCarthy said farmers shouldn't worry about the rule at all "unless you want to pollute or destroy jurisdictional water." Statements like this hint that the agency is looking to broaden the rule by making it more ambiguous, not less.

Farmers and ranchers can't afford the steep fines that regulators could impose for normal farming practices. And farmers aren't looking to sidestep regulations: We have the most to lose if one of our most valuable resources is compromised.

EPA claims that it's simplifying regulations and making them easier to follow, but the fine print tells another story. No matter what name the agency gives its rule, it can only lead to needless pain for agriculture and businesses across the country.

If EPA won't listen, perhaps Congress will. Please let your senators and representative know that farmers, small business owners and state and local governments are looking to them to stop the Waters of the U.S. rule.



Bob Stallman, President
American Farm Bureau

HOUSE KILLS THE DEATH TAX

**Rhode Island citizens
should call Senator
Reed (528-5200) and
Senator Whitehouse
(453-5294) and ask
them to support
repeal of the estate
tax and also ask
them to stop the
Waters of the U.S.
rule.**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House voted 240-179 along party lines on April 16, to repeal the estate tax as part of a GOP legislative push the week of the 12th, timed to the height of tax season.

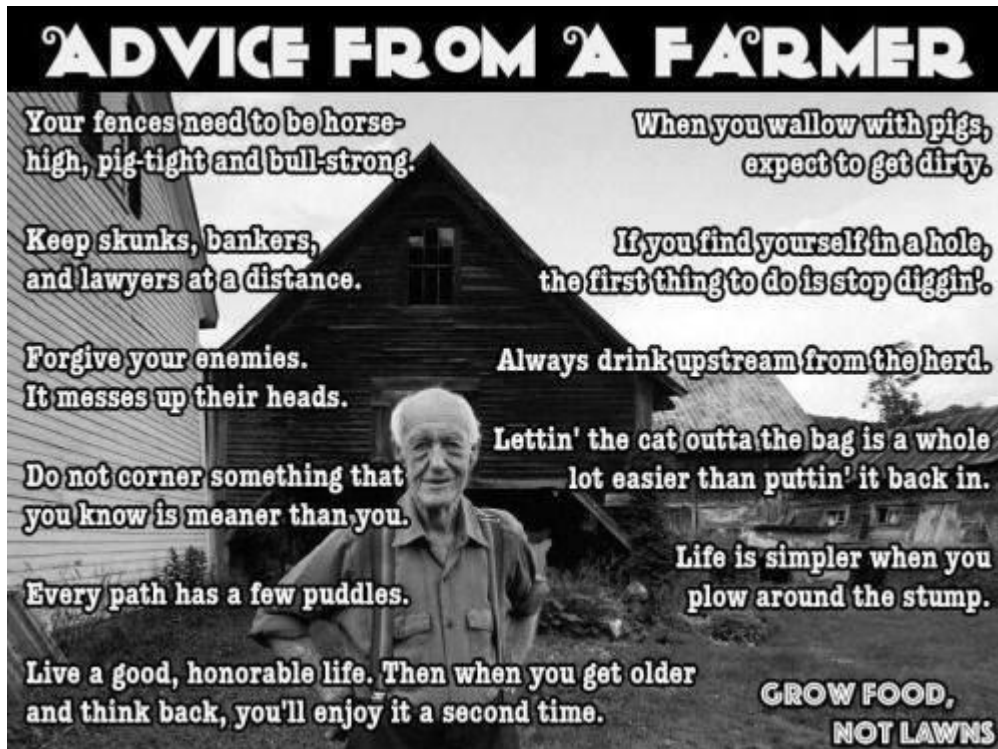
The legislation would fully repeal a tax Republicans have long dubbed the "death tax" to underscore their opposition to it.

The bill will now moves to the Senate where it could pass. However, Obama has threatened to veto the bill. Obama says this bill favors the rich.

Are farmers rich? Many farmers are said to be "land poor." Farmers have land worth a lot of money but they don't have much money to pay taxes.

Currently some of the farmer's land can be appraised as farmland but not all of it. Thus, most average size farms would have to pay an inheritance tax and the only way they can come up with the money is to sell at least part of the farm.

RI citizens should call Senator Reed (528-5200) and Whitehouse (453-5294) and ask them to support repeal of the tax.



www.farmon.com

SCHOLARSHIPS

RI Farm Bureau offers two \$500 college scholarships to students who are studying agriculture or ag-related courses. To apply send a cover letter and resume by October 1 to the RI Farm Bureau Office. We will present the scholarships at our Annual Meeting on November 19. The student or their family must be a member of the RI

Farm Bureau in order to qualify for the scholarship.



EARTH DAY

The first Earth Day was April 22, 1970. It is credited by many for launching the modern environmental movement. The passage of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and other environmental laws soon followed the first Earth Day 43 years ago. According to the Earth Day Network, more than 1 billion people now participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it the largest civic observance in the world.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Bill #	Chief Sponsor	Description	Status	RIFB Position
215 5395	Sosnowski Fogarty	No sales tax on plants and seeds used to produce food	Hearing on 3/5 Senate	Pro, our bill
5197 5078 557 549 93 5502	Canario Hull Nesselbush Nesselbush Walaska Philippi	Label GMO Food Stores must label GMOs	Various hearings held	Con
11 30 50 5105 5106	Walaska O'Neil O'Neil Chippendale Chippendale	Trade in value of pickups exempt from sales tax at various levels of \$14K, 8K and 6K	Hearings held on all bills.	Pro
34 5737	Walaska Giarrusso	Increase exemption on inheritance tax to \$2.5 million	Introduced to Finance	Pro
5505	Serpa	Increase the size of chicken battery cages	Hearing held 4/2	Con
737 5962	Lynch Handy	Change wetland laws	Hearing held 3/25 4/9	Con
20 29 5207	O'Neil Walaska Trillo	No state income tax on Social Security	Introduced to Finance	Pro
210 5000 5055 5056 5057 5446 5447	Fogarty Craven Giarrusso Morgan Costa Lancia Lancia	Exempts or reduces state income tax on certain retirement income.	Introduced to Finance	Pro
91	Kettle	Allow raw milk	Hearing 3/4	Con
110	Kettle	Repeal minimum corporate tax	Introduced to Finance	Pro
504 5669	Miller Handy	Phase out lead shot	Hearing 4/2, 4/7	Con
354 5428	Satchell Nunes	Allow sale of wine at Farmer's Market	Hearing in House 2/24	Pro
5279	Morgan	Increase exemption on inheritance tax to \$5million	Introduced to Finance	Pro



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Farm Energy Tours



Are you an ag producer who has been curious about the potential of renewable energy efficiency practices on your farm? The RI Farm Energy Program will be hosting three farm energy tours in May and June. Topics to be covered are: RI Farm Energy Program, USDA Rural Development –Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), Commerce RI –Renewable Energy Fund (REF), Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficient Improvements.

Baby Greens Farm (686 Hamilton Allenton RD N. Kingstown)

Ground Mount Solar Renewable Energy

May 6 1:00-2:00

Newport Vineyards (909 E. Main Rd, Middletown)

Roof Mount Solar and Biomass

June 2 11:00 –12:00

Knight Farm & Restaurant (1 Snake Hill Rd, North Scituate)

Roof & Ground Mount Solar Renewable Energy Systems

June 16 2:00-3:00

Call 401-500-0399 or email info@rifarmenergy.org to register

RI Farm Energy is a project of the RI RC&D Council

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Too much snow? Feeling housebound? Have extra energy and want to put it to good use? Well the RI Farm Bureau has just the outlet for your creativity. We are in need of energetic, vibrant people to volunteer at our office. Volunteers are needed during staff absences. We need help with our FaceBook page, web page and other outreach programs such as setting up and manning a booth at various fairs and getting an Ag in the Classroom program off the ground. Even this newsletter could use a sprucing. If you would love to be a part of farming, minus the dirt, this is the opportunity for you. Contact the office and let's grow together.



RAFFLE

How would you like to own a Henry® Golden Boy The American Farmer Tribute Edition rifle? RI Farm Bureau will be selling raffle tickets for a Henry® during the summer and into the fall. Details will be forthcoming in the next newsletter. The drawing will be at the Annual Meeting in November. The gun is worth over \$1,000.



DRONES

(Reuters) - The U.S. aviation regulator proposed rules on Sunday for commercial drone flights that would lift some restrictions but would still bar activities such as the delivery of packages and inspection of pipelines that have been eyed by companies as a potentially breakthrough use of the technology.

The long-awaited draft rules from the Federal Aviation Administration would require unmanned aircraft pilots to obtain special pilot certificates, stay away from bystanders and fly only during the day. They limit flying speed to 100 miles per hour (160 kph) and the altitude to 500 feet (152 meters) above ground level.

The rules also say pilots must remain in the line of sight of its radio-control drone, which could limit inspection of pipelines, crops, and electrical towers that are one of the major uses envisioned by companies.

The draft rules, nearly 10 years in the making, still must undergo public comment and revision before becoming final, a process expected to take at least a year.

Legislation has been introduced in RI to regulate drones. One bill, 5292, would give the state of RI exclusive control over drones. Bill 5293 would set up a study commission on drones. RIFB opposed 5292 and supported 5293.

WETLANDS

Senate bill 737 and House bill 5292 would expand DEM's control over wetlands. Buffer zones would be expanded from 50 feet to 200 feet and instead of protecting ponds greater than 1/4 acre and swamps greater than 3 acres, all ponds, swamps and even vernal pools would be protected. Farmers carrying out normal farming practices are exempt, but a "farmer" is defined as someone who filed a schedule "F" and grossed over \$10,000 per year for the past four years. RI Farm Bureau has written a letter to the leadership of the committees and asked that the distance and size changes not be made because this will have an adverse effect on small farmers. Or we are asking that the definition of a farmer be changed from grossing over \$10,000 to \$2,500. Next year we would like to work on the bill so that all agricultural activities are exempt from this wetland law.

RI Farm Bureau

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How has agriculture touched your life today?

GMO LABELING

Several bills have been introduced that would require the labeling of food raised using GMO methods. RI Farm Bureau has taken a position against those bills. Why?

First, this is a national issue. We cannot have 50 different state labeling laws!

Next, by requiring a label there is an implication that there is something wrong with GMOs and GMOs are something consumers should avoid. This is simply not true! The American Medical Association has stated there is nothing wrong with GMOs. The FDA and USDA say there is nothing wrong with GMOs. There has been no scientific study that has linked GMOs to poor health. Simply put GMOs are safe and may be the solution to



Current voluntary labeling allows consumers to avoid GMOs if they wish

feeding a hungry world.

Nevertheless there is something to be said about people who are insisting they have a right to know what they are eating. If a person wants to avoid GMOs they can easily do so.

There is the NON-GMO Project in the United States where food that does not have GMOs is labeled. Also, all organic food is Non-GMO. At a recent hearing, Al Betten-

court displayed a bag full of groceries he purchased that were either Non-GMO or organic. People can easily avoid GMOs if they wish without complicated state by state labeling laws. However, as Al pointed out at the hearing the bag of groceries he purchased cost \$40. Traditional groceries would have cost about \$20. So keep in mind that if we eliminate GMOs the price of your groceries is likely to go up!