

Rhode Island Farm Bureau Newsletter

National Bipartisan GMO Labeling Bill is Introduced

With Vermont's landmark GMO labeling bill soon to go into effect, it was time for Washington to respond. Without national legislation on this issue, the result would have been a 50 state patchwork of different labeling bills which would have spelled chaos for consumer packaging. Vermont's law required all items sold in the state to bear some indication of whether or not the item contained any genetically modified substances. This led to many of the larger companies such as General Mills, Campbell's Soup and others to change their packaging to accommodate Vermont's mandate. Of course, without national intervention, the remaining forty-nine states would be free to

enact their own labeling laws which, unless they mirrored Vermont's law, would have created havoc for the packaging companies.

The national bill is being sponsored by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS). If passed, this bill would establish a national, mandatory system of disclosure for food that contains GMO ingredients. The agreement also closes glaring loopholes under the Vermont law which would have allowed tens of thousands of processed food products, like frozen dinners or entrees that

contain meat and GMO ingredients, to go unlabeled. President Wright has been working closely with Senator Jack Reed and his staff on this issue. Both RI Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau support a universal labeling law and we appreciate Senator Reed's active participation in getting this bill passed. Senator Stabenow said, "This proposal is...a win for our nation's farmers and food producers...(and she) recognizes the scientific consensus that biotechnology is safe, while also making sure consumers have the right to know what is in their food..."

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Special points of interest:

- *National GMO Labeling*
- *Rural Development Grant*
- *Legislative Update*
- *Wetlands Bill Update*
- *Greenhouse Growers*
- *Annual Meeting 2016*
- *Rifle Raffle*

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Farm Bureau is Awarded a Rural Development Grant!

Rhode Island Farm Bureau has been awarded a \$25,000 Rural Development Grant from USDA. Farm Bureau will partner with Alex Caserta of Harvesting Rhode Island to produce five videos which will highlight specialty crops in Rhode Island.



The areas of interest for the Harvesting Rhode Island videos will be dairy farms, livestock farms, oyster and mussel farming, as well as herbs and other unusual crops. These productions will be aired on PBS and filming will begin in August.

Legislative Update for 2016

Aside from the truck toll legislation, not an awful lot was accomplished for agriculture at the General Assembly this year. Many bills were introduced but only a few made it out of committee. Once again, Senator Sue Sosnowski was our champion as she sponsored several bills for farmers with some success. One bill that passed out of committee was one allowing the production and sale of raw milk cheese. Two farm vehicle bills were passed. One mandates that farm vehicles traveling on public roadways must display "slow moving vehicle" signs. The other states that unregistered farm vehicles traveling on public roads are covered by insurance so long as their farm is insured with a broad liability policy.



- Another bill of interest that passed out of committee was to allow growing of industrial hemp (although there are many hurdles to jump to be licensed to grow hemp).
- The DEM Director now has the authority to terminate and revoke any DEM issued license under certain conditions.
- A bill that requires the courts to consider certain standards when granting amendments to conservation restrictions.

See the Legislative Update 2016 insert for more information.

President Wright Attends AFBF LINC/EIC Conference Memphis, TN

American Farm Bureau hosted the LINC/EIC Conference which focused on both legal and environmental issues facing the farming community nationwide. Particular emphasis was placed on property rights and how presidential executive orders are designed to give powers to departments such as USDA, Fish & Wildlife, EPA, etc. which will result in land rights being compromised. For example, if your property

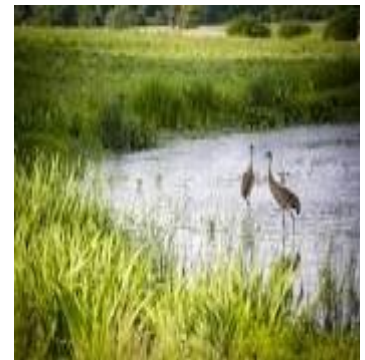
has characteristics perfect for an endangered species, the government has the authority to dictate what you must do on your property to help that species flourish. It is clear that a nationwide push is on to deprive property owners of their rights.

Another subject of interest was the WOTUS legislation. As we all are quite aware, without free access to water farming cannot succeed. The push is on to limit access.

If these issues sound familiar, they are happening right here in Rhode Island with the Wetlands Law recently passed, the conflict over pollinators and neonicotinoids, and the reintroduction of rattlesnakes to our state. Farmers who lease land for production agriculture have had to deal with their leases not being renewed so that the land can be cultivated for pollinators. We are watching this closely!

Regulations for Wetlands Still Disputed

A bill was passed during this legislative session to grant a six month continuance to allow DEM to complete the promulgation of wetlands regulations for the new wetlands law. The debate goes on in defense of farmers and agriculture and the irreparable harm that these regulations, as drafted, would do to farming in Rhode Island. With the six month reprieve we will continue to argue for the rights of farmers and fight to have agricultural land exempted from the new regulations.



RI Greenhouse Growers Association to Meet on August 23

Sponsored by RI Farm Bureau

The next meeting of the RI Greenhouse Growers Association will be held on Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at Pezza Farm, located at 2279 Plainfield Pike, Johnston, Rhode Island (401-943-2707). A light supper will be served.

Becca Trietch will be there to explain the new Farm Energy Efficiency Program and grants to help save money and energy. Gary Casabona from NRCS will speak about new grants and pollinators. Heather Faubert and Andy Radin will explain a webinar on neonicotinoids and bees created by Richard Cowles from Conn Ag Experimental Station. Two Pesticide Credits will be awarded.

Please RSVP to RIFB at 401-385-3339 by Friday, August 19 to ensure enough food for everyone. We look forward to seeing all of you there!



Have you Heard?

SourceWhatsGood.com can help you increase your sales!

Matthew Tortora of SourceWhatsGood.com has created an online network that connects chefs and restaurants directly with farmers to supply fresh, local food for the consumer. WhatsGood is an online marketplace that connects wholesale food purchasers with local purveyors through a comprehensive directory of farmers, fishermen, artisans and producers. Chefs and purchasers use the real-time, cloud-based, marketplace to communicate orders for the essential products they need to keep their kitchens cooking. WhatsGood functions as a virtual sales rep. It's as easy as shopping on Amazon. A WhatsGood account is simple, easy and free to set up, and best of all, requires no long-term commitment or contract. They charge a 1.5% fee for all items sold across the marketplace, paid by producers and only when they help them sell.

Contact Matthew at matt@sourcewhatsgood.com for more information.



Congratulations to Emma Acres

Winner of the Green Pasture Award for 2016!

This award honors an outstanding dairy family from each of the six New England states each year. Nominees are evaluated based on production and financial management, environmental practices, contributions to agriculture and the local community, and overall excellence in farm management practices.

Located in Exeter, this 12-acre farm has 28 milking cows in its 60-head herd of primarily Jersey cows. The name EMMA comes from owners Scooter and Cynthia LaPrise's four children: Elizabeth, Matthew, Margaret and Alexandra. Scooter LaPrise is a member of the RIFB Board of Directors.

Tractor Safety Course Offered for Women

As a follow up to our Women in Ag Conference held in March of this year, Rhode Island Farm Bureau and Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) have joined forces to offer a tractor safety course just for women. This course is a one day, four hour, hands-on class taught by a certified ag teacher. This is the same course offered to 4H and FFA students for their annual competition at the Big E. All equipment is provided including tractors, two-wheel manure spreader, four wheel wagons, tractor loader and skid-steer. The course will afford the participants the opportunity to operate the machinery and practice with the implements. If successful, our plan is to offer the course in different locations and not limit it to women participants. Watch our website, rifb.org, and Facebook page for details as they become available. The tentative date for the first event is Sunday, July 31 to be held in West Greenwich, RI.

CALLING ALL FARMERS!

Sue AnderBois, the newly appointed Rhode Island Director of Food Strategy, is tasked with finding avenues to expand agriculture in Rhode Island. She would like to hear directly from farmers as to what barriers and obstacles are preventing them from growing agriculture in our state. This is a stellar opportunity to have your voices heard! Ms. AnderBois answers directly to Governor Raimondo. We plan on hosting a meeting with Sue at the RIFB office on Wednesday evening, **July 20 at 6:00 p.m.** Please RSVP to the RIFB Office at 401-385-3339 to ensure sufficient seating and refreshments for all.

Employment Opportunities

Jamestown Vineyard on Beavertail Road is seeking a **full time farmer/vineyard worker**. Two mature vineyards, four varieties of grapes, spectacular waterfront location. Mechanical experience preferred but not required. Salary based upon experience. Contact Frank at 401-965-6681.

Farm Bureau is looking for a **part time summer intern** to work 10-15 hours per week to help with social media postings, newsletter information and general office help. \$10 per hour and an opportunity to continue part time when school resumes in the fall. Contact Lyn at the RIFB Office at 385-3339.

COME ONE, COME ALL !

2ND ANNUAL SUMMER MEMBER PICNIC

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14 FROM 5 PM TO 8 PM RSVP to RIFB by 8/8/16

This year's event will feature a steak fry with salad and baked potato! Grills will be available to cook your own steak or one of our Young Farmer & Rancher members will cook it up for you! There will be live music, games for the children and some door prizes! We had such a wonderful turnout last year and we hope to have more members come this year to meet the Board members and the staff. Get to know your Farm Bureau representatives! The picnic will take place at Salisbury Farm, 11 Peck Hill Road, Johnston, RI. No charge for Regular members and their families, no charge for Associate Members but each guest will pay a small fee of \$10. 4H and FFA members are also free but their guests will pay \$10 each. Bring a canned good for Ronald McDonald House!



SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, November 17, 2016



The 63rd Rhode Island Farm Bureau Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17. Once again, we will be meeting at the Alpine Country Club on Pippin Orchard Road in Cranston.

Be sure to mark your calendars for this event. As always, the food is great and the company is even better! There will be silent auction, a 50/50 raffle and the drawing of the Henry Rifle American Farmer Tribute Edition.

Zippy Duvall, the newly elected President of American Farm Bureau Federation, has indicated that he would like to come to our annual meeting, schedule permitting. Let's hope that happens.

Don't Miss This Opportunity! Win a Henry Commemorative Rifle American Farmer Edition

The Rhode Island Farm Bureau purchased two Commemorative American Farmer Henry Rifles when they became available. One of these .22 caliber stunning rifles was raffled off at last year's annual dinner meeting. We will once again be selling tickets for the second rifle which will be raffled off at the 2016 Annual Dinner Meeting at the Alpine Country Club.

Tickets are \$5 each or a book of 5 for \$20.

The left side of receiver cover features an iconic image of a farmer working behind his horse-drawn plow with his barn in the background. The cameo has 24kt. gold selective plate and the front and rear panels have the unique agricultural scroll pattern.



Right Side: The text, American Farmers Feeding the World, has been etched on a swirling banner and washed in 24kt gold. Decorative scrollwork and plant-like elements complete the design.

On the Stock: The old fashioned barn first seen the left side of the receiver cover has served generations of farmers and now has a silo and tractor in place of the old plow. An American flag is proudly displayed above the barn door. The carving is hand painted to emphasize the red of the barn and the colors of the flag.

Rhode Island Farm Fresh Foods Play Key Role in Prevention and Management of Diabetes

Karen Zarlenga, the Diabetes Clinical Manager at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital is responsible for the care of many diabetic patients living in North Providence and surrounding areas. With an impressive list of credentials to her name and extensive experience as a nurse and certified diabetes educator, she understands just how serious the problem is in Rhode Island. Karen has an additional credential: she grew up on a farm in West Greenwich, R.I. and is very proud of that heritage and of the fact that her brother Kevin Breene owns Breene Hollow Farm and is a member of Rhody Fresh. Another brother, Greg, is an agriculture teacher at Narragansett High School and raises turkeys, chickens and pigs at home. So, when [Farm Fresh Rhode Island](#) contacted her to collaborate in its “Farm to Healthcare Initiative”, Karen jumped at the chance. “This is *exactly* what we need-- to educate patients about how a diet of fresh, wholesome locally grown foods can help them manage their disease, avoid severe complications, hospitalizations and needless suffering. Just as important, our Rhode Island farms produce foods that can help others prevent the disease altogether!” Now, patients participating in Karen’s programs have the benefit of nutrition education, tastings of delicious recipes prepared with locally grown ingredients, and cooking demonstrations so they learn prepare the recipes at home.

Here’s how it works. Karen and Chef Kim Clark recently offered a cooking demonstration using all local foods to a Diabetic Outpatient group at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital in North Providence. On the menu was Frittata made with Baffoni Farms eggs, a Schartner Farm potato and tender, baby, Boston Greens Swiss Chard. Accompanying the protein based meal was a “Roots and Fruits Salad” made with an enticing variety of vegetables from Farm Fresh RI’s [“Veggie Box”](#) program including Morning Star Farms lettuce, Leach Farm apples, Schartner Farm turnip and Fairland Farm dried cranberries. Chef Kim explained to the group that the method for creating this balanced meal offered home cooks the opportunity to vary the recipe based on what is seasonally available and what they most love to eat. Dietetic Intern Brianne Cidras practiced her skills by answering the patients’ questions, an example of how FFRI is mentoring the next generation of dietitians in this “food as medicine” approach.

Events like this have been held at several Rhode Island hospitals since last fall and as the harvest season hits its stride, the effort will expand and continue to include Patient groups, cafeteria staff and customers in the local food experience.

The “Farm to Healthcare Initiative” is addressing a tremendous need: In Rhode Island, diabetes is estimated to affect more than 12% of the population, with many others not yet diagnosed. 30 million Americans suffer from diabetes. \$1 in \$ 3 Medicare dollars is spent caring for people with diabetes. Every year \$322 billion dollars are spent on pre-diabetes and diabetes in our nation.

Simply put: Farmers can be healers too. Wholesome food is fundamental to our health. We all--consumers and health care organizations--would be smart to pay our local farmers more and save on health care costs.

Marydale DeBor
Fresh Advantage® LLC
Consultant to Farm Fresh Rhode Island

Memories from the Southern RI 4H Fair!



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We're on the Web:
www.RIFB.org



Thank a farmer 3 times a day!



Highlights of the Southern RI 4H Fair June 25/26, 2016

Photos by Bill Gallery

