



NO FARMERS, NO FOOD!

SEARCH FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The RI Farm Bureau is searching for a new executive director. The executive director is responsible for the day to day operation of the RI Farm Bureau office and is also responsible for public relations, membership recruitment and other duties. Qualifications include good communication skills, ability to run computer programs, available to attend meeting in the evening and on weekends.

Details of the position description are still being worked on.

If you think you might be interested, call the RI Farm Bureau at 385-3339.

RIFB WINS APEX AWARD

RI Farm Bureau has once again qualified for the prestigious Apex Award, presented by the American Farm Bureau Foundation (the educational arm of the American Farm Bureau). The award is given to any state that has donated at least 10% more to the Foundation than the previous year. Donations from individual members, Silent Auction purchases and donations from county and state Farm Bureaus all contribute to achieving the Apex Award.

RI Farm Bureau has won the award 4 out of the last 5 years.

How has agriculture touched your life today?

GAP / FSMA TRAINING

The URI Cooperative Extension Food Safety Program will be offering a FSMA Produce Safety Rule/Produce Safety Alliance Approved Grower and RI GAP Training on Weds/Thurs, March 22-23 at Building 75, URI East Farm, Route 108, Kingston.

The training will allow farmers to become part of our RI GAP audit program. RI farmers will have the option to obtain the PSA/AFDO certificate that will prove you have taken the "approved" course per the rule. For those farmers who have already taken RI GAP training, that training does not count toward compliance.

If you are affected by the new FSMA rule you have to get the PSA/AFDO certificate. Those who gross more than \$500,000 per year must be in compliance by 2018. If you make less than 25K you are exempt. Those that fall inbetween may have until 2019 or 2020 to comply.

The cost of a PSA/AFDO certificate is \$35 for each person (check or cash). No more than 2 people per farm may attend.

The deadline to register is March 1. However there still may be room if you get this after March 1.

For more information and to register call Lori Pivarnik at URI 874-2972

FARMER'S MARKETS

There are nearly 50 farmer's markets in the state of RI. The rules of private markets vary and the cost to participate in those markets varies. However you can participate in any State Market for free.

The state has announced the dates and hours of the State markets. They are:

Goddard First Friday in May 9-1

Fisherman's First Sunday in May 9-1

Haines Park First Weds in May 2-6

Capitol Hill July 14 11-2

If you want to collect Senior Coupons and WIC and SNAP you must fill out an application. Contact Ron Newman (222-2781 ext 4518) or Pete Susi (222-2781 ext 4517).

RI FARM TO INSTITUTION

By the Numbers

Farm to School	\$20,212,700 on local food
Farm to College	\$4,812,500 on local food
Farm to Health Care	\$82,800

There are 1,243 farmers in RI. It is estimated there are \$59 million in sales each year. Their average income is \$47,990. Fourteen percent of farmers sell directly to retail including institutions.

Source: The Farm to Institution New England.

*Have you paid you dues
this year?*

RI FARM ENERGY PROGRAM

The RI Farm Energy Program (RIFEP) is a project of the RI Resource and Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc. that serves as a resource on energy as it relates to agriculture in RI.

RIFEP provides Ag Producers and Ag-based Small Businesses with current information on energy, grant opportunities and supportive events.

Grants are available for Biomass, Geothermal, Hydropower, Hydrogen, Small and Large Wind Generation, Small and Large Solar Generation and Tidal.

Grants are also available for Insulation, Lighting, Cooling or Refrigeration Units, Switching from diesel to electric irrigation motors and replacement of energy-inefficient equipment.

Grants are available through DEM, USDA and other organizations. Go to the RIFEP web site for more information. <http://rifarmenergy.org>. or call 401-500-0399.

NRCS ANNOUNCES SIGN UP FOR PROGRAMS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) encourages farmers and forest landowners to sign up for NRCS conservation funding. FY 2017 funding is available for private agricultural land and private forestry or woodland owners in RI under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP), Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

The financial and technical assistance is available to assist private land owners and managers in addressing farm, field, forest, wildlife, water, and/or plant management issues including: erosion control, irrigation systems, fencing, forestry management, pasture and hayland planting, riparian buffers, wildlife habitat and many more.

Deadline for most programs is April 21, 2017. Call NRCS at 822-8848. Visit their web site at: www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov.