

Rhode Island Farm Bureau Newsletter



RIFB Annual Meeting Held November 16, 2017

The 64th Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Farm Bureau was held on November 16 at The Quonset 'O' Club in North Kingstown. Over 120 members and guests attended over the course of this all-day meeting.

The day began with a 10 a.m. workshop on the Produce Safety Rule portion of FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act). Ken Ayars, Chief of RI Division of Ag; Lori Pivarnik, Coordinator URI Food Safety Outreach/Research; and Sean McCormick, Principal Health Promotion Specialist, DOH/Center for Food Safety headed a panel which discussed the current status of the rule, and helped farms determine if it would apply to them.

After a sponsored lunch was served, Doreen Pagliarini hosted a workshop on Cooking With Local foods where she created a number of delicious seasonal dishes. Donations from Narragansett Creamery, Salisbury Farms, Confreda Farm and On The Lane Farm were utilized to create a Bacon-Pumpkin Sauté and Topsy Figs, just two of a number of dishes those in the audience sampled.

After an early afternoon ice cream social, the Business Meeting was held. New Board members Donald Hopkins of Hopkins Southdowns in Scituate, and Ann Marie Bouthillette of Blackbird Farm in Smithfield were elected to a two-year term, filling spots vacated by outgoing members Stuart K. "Stook" MacDonald and Doreen Pezza. Re-elected to the Board of Directors for a two-year term were Brenda Frederickson, Tim Gallagher, Jean Helger-Bento, Edwin "Scooter" LaPrise, Bill Tabor and Bill Stamp III.

Members voted to support two resolutions: the first urging AFBF to take legal action to stop the implementation of FSMA, and the second advocating that safety inspections not be required on registered vehicles not traveling on town, state or federal roads.

The evening program included Dave Salmonsens, Senior Director of Congressional Relations for AFBF. Dave spoke about the Farm Bill and many current legislative issues at the national level. Honored that night were: Ken Payne, Golden Tractor Award, for his countless hours of pro bono consultation as well as advice to RIFB on a number of agricultural issues affecting RI Farms.

(continued)

Happy New Year!

Volume 19, Issue 1

January 2018

Winter Markets

There are 6 Winter Markets in Rhode Island.

Visit www.dem.ri.gov/programs/agriculture/ for a printable list

OR

Visit www.farmfreshri.org where you can input your ZIP code for the markets nearest you.

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RIFB Annual Meeting, cont.

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Ken is a two-time recipient of the Golden Tractor Award. Receiving the Navigator Award for sponsoring bills that benefits RI farmers were Senator Sue Sosnowski, Representative Kathleen Fogarty and Representative Arthur Handy. This year Outstanding House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Person Awards were given to Representative David Bennett, Representative Raymond Hull and Representative Alex Marszalkowski for their strong opposition to H6023, the “chicken bill”. Representative Sherry Roberts also attended the dinner program, and Senator Elaine Morgan attended the FSMA seminar and morning programming. Past President Bill Stamp, Jr. was presented with the title of President Emeritus and Jim Pagliarini was presented with the title of Director Emeritus.

This year RIFB scholarships were awarded to eight deserving students. High school seniors Jamie Nadiger, Sabrina Peltier and Todd Poulos are all entering college this Fall in ag-related studies. College students Casey Michalowski, Sofia Michalowski, Sydney Pezza-Luther and Kayte Sousa are continuing their college careers, and Karalyn Lonngren is attending the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Congratulations and Best Wishes to all this year’s winners!

In addition to our Henry Golden Boy Rifle Raffle, and the 50/50 Raffle, winners of the Bag Raffle went home with over 20 donated items. **Once again, Grainger generously donated number of items, see the list of winners on the next page.**

President Wright Travels to D.C. and Northeast Meetings:

In **July**, President Henry B. Wright III was the only Farm Bureau President invited to meet with the FDA in College Park, MD to discuss FSMA. This invitation was in response to the June 25 Providence Journal article entitled “R.I. farmers push back on new federal food-safety rules” in which Wright was interviewed. President Wright met with Mike Mahovic, one of the lead Subject Matter Experts for the FSMA Produce Rule to discuss concerns RI farmers had about FSMA. The next day he attended the AFBF Summer Council of Presidents meeting where financial issues AFBF faces were discussed. The Presidents were given options and then tasked with developing strategies to address these issues. In **August**, President Wright attended the Northeast Presidents and Administrators meeting in New Jersey with Executive Director Heidi Quinn. In **September**, nominated by Senator Jack Reed, President Wright was among attendees from across the U.S. at the Democratic National Summit. The focus was on increasing access to health care and growing the economy in rural America. Topics included: investing in basic infrastructure like building roads, schools, and hospitals and ensuring access to critical services like health care, water and wastewater, and broadband internet; fostering innovations that create new jobs and businesses in the energy, health care, agricultural economies; and strengthening a middle-class economy that honors our commitments to seniors and veterans while attracting the next generation of farmers and ranchers, young families, workers, and small business owners and entrepreneurs. In **October**, Wright attended the AFBF Board of Directors meeting when President Zippy Duvall requested the attendance of all the FB presidents. A number of important issues were discussed and voted on, including bylaws changes, a proposed dues increase, Annual Convention and the AFBF budget, which was a main focus of the July Council of Presidents Meeting. In **December** Wright attended the AFBF Board Of Directors and Resolutions Committee meeting in Washington, where state FB presidents reviewed hundreds of resolutions and recommendations to the board in preparation for the Annual Convention in Nashville. President Henry Wright received invitations to all the Northeast FB Annual Meetings, and was able to attend the Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York Farm Bureau Annual Meetings. Most of the states addressed FSMA and how it will affect their members. The following day, President Wright met with New York Commissioner of Agriculture, Richard Ball. They discussed opportunities for the Northeast states to work together on agricultural initiatives, especially Go Local. Finishing up several days in Albany, President Wright also attended the Farm Family Advisory Board meeting.

RIFB Hires New Executive Director

On July 16, RIFB hired Heidi Quinn as their new Executive Director.

A lifelong resident of Richmond, RI, Quinn said she comes to the position with "a lifetime of working with Rhode Island farmers as friends and family." Her personal agricultural experience includes raising beef, turkeys, layers, and hogs.

For her formal education, she earned a B.S. in Education from the University of Rhode Island with a concentration in animal science. She worked as a long-term substitute teacher for twelve years before taking a hiatus to raise her family.



For the past six years, Quinn has served as the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association (RIRLA), a position she will continue to hold while fulfilling her Farm Bureau responsibilities.

RIFB President Henry B. Wright, III said Quinn's success with the RIRLA was a strong recommendation for her new role. He cited her background in agriculture and knowledge of the local farming community as some of her strongest assets.

One goal Wright has for the new Executive Director is to reestablish RIFB's Ag in the Classroom program, a task for which her experience in education particularly prepared her. She has re-booted the RIFB Young Farmer & Rancher program already, with the new committee making plans for spring and summer programming.

On her first day at RIFB, Quinn accompanied President Wright to a meeting with US Representative David Cicilline on the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011. Quinn traveled with President Wright to Concord, NH for a Young Farmer/Rancher Conference the following day. In August Quinn attended the Northeast Presidents and Administrators Conference in New Jersey with President Wright, and in September she traveled to New Orleans for the 2019 Pre-Con and FAM , and Orientation and Grass Roots training in Washington, D.C. The multitude of people Quinn met from both AFBF and numerous state Farm Bureaus in just her first 6 weeks made for a comfortable transition into RIFB. Quinn said she looks forward to the opportunities afforded by Farm Bureau to learn, and to transfer that knowledge to members.

Grainger Prize Winners at the Annual Meeting Were:

Igloo 5 gal cooler:: Martha Thoman

Electrician's Work Pouch: Ken Panciera

Phillips Screwdriver Set 10pc: Jamie Nadiger

Coleman 45qt Wheeled Cooler: Timothy Schartner

Telescopic Scraper & Igloo Cooler: Stephen Croteau

Milwaukee Hex Impact Driver - Black & Decker Driver Set: Michael Coia

Subzero - Telescopic Snow Shovel /Snow Brush & Scraper 26": Martha Thoman

Precision Screwdriver Set: David Bennett

Dewalt 1/2" Drill Driver Kit: Eric Saccico

Bosch Drill Driver & Batteries: David Bennett

LOVES

hiking, hound dogs,
sunsets on the farm and



tax preparation.

Not too many people smile when you mention April 15, but for Farm Credit East tax expert Carolyn Huff, it's one of her favorite times of year. In fact, all of our tax experts not only enjoy helping our clients prepare their yearly returns for filing, but working with them to make year-round decisions to ensure they pay no more than they should.


Sure, Carolyn's love of tax prep may seem a little unusual, but when it comes to making sure that our clients are strategic and compliant, we wouldn't have it any other way — because WE ARE YOU.



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RICHARD BROCK
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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

In 2017, Rhode Island Farm Bureau engaged the services of F/S Capital Consulting for our lobbying needs. We now have two lobbyists working on behalf of the RIFB at the statehouse several days a week.

The lobbyists have provided us with 2017 Rhode Island Farm Bureau Bill Statistics:

- 2,415 bills were filed during the 2017 legislative session
- 47 bills were identified as relevant to and tracked for the RI Farm Bureau
- 7 bills were filed on behalf of the RI Farm Bureau, 5 of those bills were passed by the General Assembly, and 1 of those bills was inserted into the state budget and passed as part of the budget
- 9 bills were passed with RI Farm Bureau support, 3 of those were individual House or Senate Resolution
- 3 bills were stopped from passing with RI Farm Bureau opposition

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Don't forget your membership benefits! You can easily save the cost of your dues by taking advantage of these discounts:

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Did you know that you need a conservation plan?



The RI Conservation Districts are working with NRCS, under a special program, to write Farm Conservation Plans for the Farm Forest and Open Space (FFOS) Program of Rhode Island.

A conservation plan is a tool designed to help you better manage the natural resources on your farm and in turn may help save you money.

If you are in the farm program or are thinking about applying, this is a great opportunity for you!

Funding has been secured for a limited # of plans.

ACT NOW to assure you are approved for this special offer before all slots are filled.

Get a \$950 valued plan for only \$100, under special project funds!

For more information, contact your local Conservation District:

Northern RI Conservation District
Serving Providence County
(401) 934-0840

Southern RI Conservation District
Serving Kent and Washington Counties
(401) 500-0422

Eastern RI Conservation District
Serving Bristol and Newport Counties
(401) 934-0840



Beyond the Fencerows : A Message from AFBF President Zippy Duvall

Agriculture's Time for Tax Reform December 2017



Congress is debating the first major tax reform package in more than 30 years. This is no small task, and if the right provisions are set in place, an updated federal tax code could yield real economic growth across rural America.

We've been busy reviewing the tax plan details, looking to the bills coming out of committee, and keeping our eyes set on our primary goal: reducing the tax burden for America's farms and ranches. We talk a lot about how farms and ranches face unique challenges, and that fact becomes all the more clear during tax season. For example, 94 percent of all farms are not incorporated as large businesses—which goes to show how much smaller our stack of income receipts is compared to most businesses. We face the balancing act every season as we manage high input costs against an unpredictable cash flow to keep our businesses running and, we hope, turn a profit. It takes a lot of faith and careful business planning—some years even the best plans are wiped out by Mother Nature or a downturned economy.

Farmers know better than most how to stretch every dollar, and that's why we depend on tax provisions that let us deduct legitimate business expenses—from regular expenses like feed, seed and fuel to major expenses like equipment and interest on loans. We also rely on accounting practices such as cash accounting, which helps us deal with narrow margins in an unpredictable industry. Common-sense tax reform must continue to include provisions, such as like-kind exchanges and stepped-up basis, that help farmers and ranchers weather the ups and downs. Otherwise, farmers will face a tax increase without the deductions they count on.

Any tax boost will be short-lived on the farm if farmers can't pass on their businesses from one generation to the next. For too long the estate tax has hung over the heads of farmers and ranchers. It threatens the future of our farms and forces us to find workarounds to keep businesses in the family and preserve our nation's agriculture industry.

Land is at the center of all of this. It's our greatest asset, but it can also be the hardest to come by as property values increase. Younger generations who would otherwise return to the farm are hard pressed to hold on to that farm property if they can't afford to pay the estate tax. Farm Bureau has been working for decades now to see the estate tax put to death once and for all. Rural farm families shouldn't be forced to spend their limited resources protecting themselves from a tax that was meant for the wealthy.

Lawmakers need to hear from you as tax reform legislation comes up for a vote. We are long overdue for a federal tax code that gives us the freedom to reinvest in our businesses and keeps agriculture moving forward. We must be certain that Congress' action on tax reform does just that.

Many of you have heard me speak about this being "our time," meaning agriculture's time to make progress on issues we've been working on for years. Tax reform is definitely on that list of issues, and with a Congress and White House that are working to create a tax code that rewards hard work and helps farmers and ranchers keep more of their hard-earned money on the farm, it is our time. To ensure we capitalize on this short window of opportunity—our time—we must engage with our senators and representatives in Congress.

REACH OUT TODAY TO TAKE CARE OF TOMORROW

JOHN T. HOWARD

Agent

780 Victory Highway
W Greenwich, RI 02817-2193
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✉ john.howard@farm-family.com
☎ 401.397.1050



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ASHLEY MCCULLOUGH

Agent

780 Victory Highway, Unit 1
W Greenwich, RI 02817-2193
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✉ ashley.mccullough@farm-family.com
☎ 401.397.1050



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Local and National Fall Issues

Exeter Farm and Forest Accessory Business Overlay District :

Six months after President Henry Wright was first made aware of the Exeter Farm and Forest Accessory Business Overlay District, sending a letter to its author, Scott Millar, outlining the concerns RIFB had with this proposal, it was withdrawn. Leading up to the decision to withdraw the proposal were a number of strategy meetings at RIFB, public meetings, and weeks of debate between the Council; the Exeter Planning Board; Scott Millar of Grow Smart Rhode Island; and Rhode Island Farm Bureau. Helped along by a strong push from Our Kids Farm, the Exeter Town council withdrew the Business Overlay District proposal in September. This ordinance conflicted with the Right to Farm Act, and contained excessive overuse of regulations, thus undermining the ability of farms to use their land at their own accord. Strong support came from the Ag and Farming community from neighboring towns as well as other areas of RI. Unfortunately, there are other town councils in our state looking at similar ordinances in other towns in RI. Stay vigilant, this is not over yet.

Produce Safety Rule (PSR) Portion of Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA):

The Food Safety Modernization Act was passed in 2011, yet it has never been fully implemented. The Produce Safety Rule is set to be enforced beginning January 1, 2018, however certain components of the rule have had the date pushed back even further. This summer, four meetings were held between RI farmers and Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, as well as Congressmen James Langevin and David Cicilline, to discuss the impact implementing this rule would have on RI produce farmers.

A number of meetings have been held across RI with a panel featuring Ken Ayars, Chief of RI Division of Ag; Lori Pivarnik, Coordinator URI Food Safety Outreach/Research; and Sean McCormick, Principal Health Promotion Specialist, DOH/Center for Food Safety. Many good questions have been asked, prompting questions being asked on a higher level. Rhode Island is not alone in scheduling workshops on FSMA, MA and NY also had workshops at their Annual meetings to address FSMA. The FSMA regulations are a living document, and changes are still being made. Whenever possible, take advantage of workshops held to explain current guidelines and changes.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Electronic Logging Devices (ELD's):

In 2012, the United States Congress enacted the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" bill, or, more commonly referred to as MAP-21. That bill, which also outlined the criteria for highway funding, included a provision requiring the FMCSA to develop a rule mandating the use of electronic logging devices (ELDs). The rule was implemented on December 18, 2017. On December 15, 2017, DOT released details on the initial 90-day waiver from the requirement for agricultural and livestock haulers to obtain Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs). The 90-day waiver begins December 18th and allows the agency time to further examine our exemption request while developing additional guidance for agricultural haulers. Most farmers and ranchers should be exempt from the ELD mandate because they can claim covered farm vehicle (CFV) status. Those who cannot claim CFV status will be able to take advantage of the 90-day waiver. This waiver will be officially published soon, but it waives the ELD mandate for those transporting agriculture commodities, livestock, fish and insects through March 18, 2018. An email was sent to our regular members with more details and links regarding the rule and the 90-day waiver. If you did not receive this email, and wish to have the information emailed to you, please call the office at 401-385-3339 or email Heidi at rifarm@rifb.org.

Harvesting RI Update

Alex Caserta of Caserta Productions gave us a mid-December update on the **Harvesting Rhode Island** series:

“We have completed filming at four new farms, which will turn into two half-hour episodes. The four farms include Emma Acres, Narrow Lane Orchard, Blackbird Farm, and Wright’s Dairy Farm. These episodes are being edited over the winter , and will be on PBS in the spring, attached to **Season Two** episodes.”

Funds for the project were provided by a grant from USDA Rural Development through the RI Farm Bureau.

Caserta Productions was also just awarded a specialty crop grant through RI DEM and will be filming at 14 locations this summer. This will create seven new episodes which will be out for **Season Three** in Spring of 2019. Alex is also looking for suggestions about specialty crop farmers who are harvesting a different crop from the norm. If anyone is doing vertical growing, or growing inside a facility of some sort, please contact us at rifarm@rifb.org or 401-385-3339, and we will pass your interest or suggestions along to Alex.

If you haven’t seen any episodes yet, the series runs on Rhode Island PBS, and WSBE and is currently running at random times. Before new episodes air in Spring of 2018, you can watch past episodes at <http://www.harvestingrhodeisland.com/>.

NO FARMERS NO FOOD

THANK A FARMER THREE TIMES PER DAY

Updating Your Email Address

RIFB wants to provide you with timely updates on legislation, meetings and other important information. Our intern has been working diligently to ensure that all member emails are correctly categorized to ensure that you receive our emails. If you do not currently receive emails from **RI Farm** (rifarm@rifb.org), please email us (**using your preferred email**) or use the Contact Form on our website to provide us with the best email to use.

Access Benefits emails: You may be receiving occasional emails from Access Development, the vendor that provides you with your Access Discount Membership Card. When registering your card, you provided your email to Access Development. They send weekly emails about discounts you can receive as a RI Farm Bureau member. This is not our office email. At the bottom of each of the Access Development emails (the sender is **Rhode Island Farm Bureau**) is a box where you can easily Opt– Out if you prefer to get no Access Benefits emails. Opting-Out will NOT prevent you from receiving our emails provided we have your current email address.



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982 West Shore RD • Warwick RI 02889

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RI Farm Bureau

16 B Nooseneck Hill Rd
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Phone: 401-385-3339
Fax: 401-385-3394
E-mail: rifarm@rifb.org
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