

Rhode Island Farm Bureau Newsletter



2020 RIFB Annual Meeting Update

Volume 21, Issue 4

October 2020

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Rhode Island Farm Bureau has made the decision **not** to hold our traditional Annual Meeting.

We will be holding in-person Election Voting and Resolutions Voting.

Full-Time Farmer (Voting) members have been sent the 2020 Slate as presented by the RIFB Nominating Committee. Because there can be no nominations from the floor, that sheet also contains a **Nominating Form** which **must be signed by the individual being nominated, not the person nominating them.** Do **not** return the form unless you wish to nominate someone. Candidates for the Board of Directors must be Full-Time Farmer members in good standing. If you are a Full-Time Farmer member and did NOT receive the mailing, please call the office right away at 401-385-3339 to have one sent. The deadline for submissions is October 8.

Voting will be held on **November 19** at the Coventry-West Greenwich Elks Lodge at 42 Nooseneck Hill Road, West Greenwich, RI from 4-7 p.m. (Please use the parking lot side/banquet entrance.) Masks will be required for entry and social distancing will be observed. **This will be voting only, and not a regular meeting.** If you prefer not to enter the building, a ballot will be brought to your vehicle. **Voting members** will receive an updated mailing mid-October containing a Sample Ballot with the proposed slate and any additional nominees.

In the July newsletter, we relayed all the items RIFB has worked on for our members since the beginning of the pandemic in March. RI Farm Bureau is still working for you. Farms have been struggling with balancing agritourism activities and Phase 3 Guidance. There have been two Zoom/conference calls already specifically relating to Agritourism, and a weekly Ag call hosted by Ken Ayars, Chief of the RI Division of Ag, continues to be held at 1 pm on Tuesdays and covers all things Ag related during the pandemic. We continually update our website with programs and guidance to help all farmers. A list of FAQ's about Agritourism and Phase 3 Guidance is available on our RIFB.org website. You may also call the office at 401-385-3339 to have it mailed to you if you do not have Internet access.

Board of Directors

Henry B. Wright III, President
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Wayne Salisbury
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Rebecca Whitford,
Administrative Assistant

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Hunger Action Month: Taking Action in RI

On September 16, in honor of Hunger Action month, Stop & Shop teamed up with the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and Young Family Farm to donate 5 tons of fresh produce to local hunger relief agencies including Martin Luther King Center, East Bay Community Action Newport and the Little Compton Assistance Association to benefit local families in need. At Young Family Farm in Little Compton, Stop & Shop associates and Rhode Island Community Food Bank staff filled 1,000 bags with a variety of produce including baby carrots, tomatoes and zucchini - in addition to potatoes and kabocha squash from Young Family Farm. The produce donation was loaded into a Food Bank truck, which then delivered most of the fresh goods to four local hunger-relief agencies, with some local agencies arriving at the farm throughout the morning to pick up bags.



According to Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger relief organization, coronavirus-related economic crises could push the number of food insecure Americans to 54 million by year's end. Since the start of the pandemic, the Food Bank has increased food distribution by 45%. Through its network of member agencies around the state, the organization has gone from serving 53,000 people each month to 68,000 Rhode Islanders in need. As a neighborhood grocer for more than 100 years, Stop & Shop is proud to join the movement in taking a stand against hunger by providing Rhode Island communities with fresh produce which is so critical during this public health crisis. Tyler and Karla Young of Young Family Farm have been active partners with the RI Community Food bank for more than a dozen years, and the farm's contribution to the organization has reached the equivalent of well over 1 million donated meals.



Above (l to r) Senator Lou DiPalma, District 12; Tyler Young, owner, Young Family Farm; David Macchioni, Stop & Shop E Commerce Operations Manager; Heidi Quinn, Director, RI Farm Bureau; Tyler Hagm/Aier, Stop & Shop, Asst. Category Manager of Packaged Produce. (Right) Bags ready to be delivered to those in need. (Top right) One of many bag packing stations set up for volunteers.





LET'S TALK ABOUT THE STATE OF YOUR FARM INSURANCE

Big or small, when you dedicate your life and well-being into a farm, you need more than just a policy—you need an ally. Your operation is unique and a one-size-fits-all insurance policy isn't for you. You deserve a customized coverage plan and American National gets it. An American National Special Farm Package 10® or Country Estate policy can provide you with a flexible package that allows you to tailor a policy to match your individual needs, with coverage options that include windstorm, fire, mechanical equipment and utility line failures, machinery, livestock and more. Find a local agent at an.insure/rifb



American National is a group of companies writing a broad array of insurance products and services. Products and services may not be available in all states. Terms, conditions and eligibility requirements will apply. Life insurance and annuity products may be underwritten by American National Insurance Company, Galveston, Texas. Property and casualty products and services may be underwritten by Farm Family Casualty Insurance Company, Glenmont, New York.

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Young Ag Professionals

On September 16th the RI Young Ag Professionals had their first meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The meeting, titled **Farming in RI During the COVID Pandemic**, was held at the West Greenwich Town Pavilion with six members present. Three speakers were there in person and a fourth joined in via Zoom. The topic of discussion was how farmers have been dealing with the difficulties of farming during these changing times. It focused on the farms' sales during the pandemic, how they were affected by COVID restrictions, and agritourism on the farm.

Ken Ayars, Chief of the RI Division of Agriculture, spoke about the work that occurred immediately after shut-downs began, helping to ensure that farmers could remain operational while still following new restrictions which were being created on the fly. Weekly calls open to the state's entire agricultural community allowed for questions, answers, and conversation on operating under these restrictions. Martha Neale, owner of Windmist Farm in Jamestown; Sara Partyka, owner of The Farmer's Daughter in South Kingstown; and Gina Thurn, owner of Our Kids Farm in Exeter, RI were the farmer-panelists. Each of them discussed how they felt they were unexpectedly prepared for the situation because of their business plans and/or farm structure. They discussed how their businesses have changed throughout the pandemic, and the likelihood that some of these changes (such as online ordering) may remain for various reasons post-pandemic..

Become GAP Certified

If you are receiving this, you have likely heard of the RI GAP program and know that there is a system in place and support for growers in Rhode Island that may need to undergo a RI GAP audit. We are well into the growing season, but we have developed a system to facilitate participation in this program for this unique season.

You can learn more about the RI GAP program by:

1. Visiting [The RI Produce Safety Portal](#)
2. Reviewing [RI GAP Certification During Covid-19](#)
3. Contacting Ananda Fraser:
Produce Safety Program Coordinator
RI DEM – Division of Agriculture
401-537-8093
Ananda.Fraser@dem.ri.gov

All of the above information can be accessed on our rifb.org website for those with internet access.

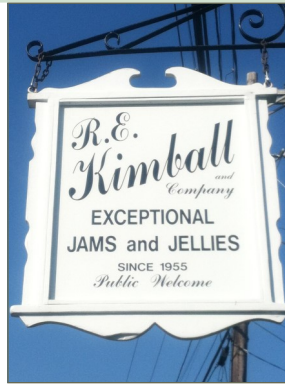
If you do not have access to the Internet, please call Ananda Fraser (listed above) to find out more about becoming GAP certified.

Need to apply for or renew your pesticide license?

While pesticide license training is normally done cooperatively with URI, DEM will be doing **testing only** until on-campus classes resume. Testing is available for **all** pesticide applicator licenses and categories. There is currently no list of dates as of yet, but exams will be scheduled based on demand. Study material can be made available for pickup at DEM's Agriculture office. For more information on how to take your pesticide license test or to get study materials, please contact Harold.Puckett@dem.ri.gov or Kimberly.Lavoie@dem.ri.gov.

If you do not have Internet access, you may contact Harold Puckett at DEM Ag 401- 222-2781, Ext 7261 or Kim LaVoie at DEM Ag 401-222-2781, Ext 4513.

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BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIIP

Don't forget your membership benefits! You can easily save the cost of your dues by taking advantage of these discounts. Go to rifb.org for more info on:

American National Insurance

Avis

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Case IH

Caterpillar

Choice Hotels

Dungarees.com

Ford & Lincoln

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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



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Updating Your Email Address

RIFB wants to provide you with timely updates on legislation, meetings and other important information. We have worked hard 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.

Membership Incentive 4th Quarter 2020

Beginning October 1, we will be offering a **discounted membership to new* Full-Time and Part-Time Farmer members**. New Full-Time Farmer memberships will be \$100 (a \$25 discount) and new Part-Time memberships will be \$60 (a \$15 discount).

If you refer the new member, you will also receive the discounted amount of \$25 or \$15 as a credit toward your own membership.

Paper membership forms are available at the RI Farm Bureau office or you may request to have some mailed to you. Online membership is available at our website at rifb.org. Please tell the person you referred to place your name in the Referred By section.

*Renewals must be at least 9 months in arrears to qualify and can be verified by calling the office at 401-385-3339.



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Meet the RIFB Board, October Edition

Henry B. Wright III, of Wright Hill Farm, was born on his family's farm in West Greenwich, RI. His father taught him about cutting-edge farming from the 1800's through to when Henry was born. At age four, accompanied by his dad, Henry began driving and harnessing horses before the farm transitioned to all tractors. Their farm was one of the first in the area to grow hybrid corn which piqued his interest, especially with the tremendous yield improvement that the hybrid variety provided. Henry joined 4-H at the age of eight with chicken, veggie, and calf projects. He went on to become a junior leader in 4-H and became President of the 4-H Allstars at 18. He was also active in FFA, obtaining the rank of State Sentinel. Henry attended the University of NH studying soil water conservation, leaving after 2 ½ years to join the service. He graduated the 7th Army Non-Commission Officers Academy and the Army of Europe Combat Engineers Non-Commission Officers Academy and was appointed to the rank of Sergeant.

After the service Henry went on to finish his degree at the University of New Hampshire. He then worked for Hull Forest Products on and off for 20 years as a certified hardwood lumber grader, having graduated from the UMASS Hardwood Grading short course. Henry was also in charge of inputs for the sawmill, of chip brokering for power plants, and pulp wood in New England. He designed and manufactured a wood & coal burner which he sold to wholesalers in the East and Canada. Henry raised a small herd of Black Baldies before switching to Scottish Highlanders, marketing them through cattle dealers as pets and custom farm beef. He was involved with custom farming, selling seed and crop consulting.

Henry became an RIFB Board Member in 1994 and was elected President in 2014. For 20 years he was the legislative representative to the Congressional Delegation for the Disabled American Veterans. He was their state department inspector for 25 years and state department commander for 2 years. Henry has been on the RI 4-H Foundation since the 80's and is a past president; he has been on the Board of Trustees for the Big E since 1990. Henry is the past president of the State Fire League, past chairman of the state Forest Fire Advisory Committee, is currently First Vice- President and is a past president of his local fire department. He is past E Board president of the RI Fish and Game Protective Association. Henry still sells hay, sells seed to farmers in RI and eastern CT, and does custom work.

Ann Marie Bouthillette, of Blackbird Farm in Smithfield, grew up on a twelve-acre family farm in Glocester, RI. Her father had a love for animals, but his own father told him "no animals", to which he replied, "One day I will have so many animals you will not be able to count them." Her dad grew up to run a dog kennel and raise cattle. Ann Marie was a 4-H and FFA member, and at the age of 16 worked for Rachel Breck at Hedgerows Farm in West Cornwall, CT. Mrs. Breck was sometimes referred to as "First Lady of the Angus Industry" and was inducted into the Aberdeen Angus Hall of Fame. At Hedgerows Farm, Ann Marie showed cattle and learned about pedigrees, embryos, etc. In her later years Mrs. Breck told Ann Marie she always knew she would be someone important in the Angus business.

Ann Marie attended Davies Vo-Tech for three years where she studied horticulture, animal science, and floriculture, and then studied Animal Science at UCONN. In 1984 she married her husband, Kevin, and moved her few Angus cows to 4 acres that he already owned. About thirteen years ago, with the economy failing, Kevin told her they would have to downsize their 25 cattle. Ann Marie told him they could turn it around and become profitable, and so they gave themselves 4 months. She then noticed a reference to FarmFresh.Org in the RIFB newsletter and contacted them. Farm Fresh RI set her up online where she connected with chefs from various restaurants. This quickly led to insufficient inventory which meant she needed even more cows and more land.

Today the Bouthillette family raises 75 Black Angus cows and 40 American Heritage Berkshire sows and 4 boars on over 215 acres. They have had hardships along the way, but Ann Marie and her husband have a great partnership. She learned years ago you either want to be productive or you don't. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic they have been successful with plans they have implemented over the last couple of years. Ann Marie believes their success is due to treating their customers fairly. Today their son Brandon and his wife, Sarah, have picked up the day to day operations for the farm, continuing what Ann Marie and Kevin began so many years ago. Their son Troy manages Kevin's business, Intercity Contracting, where their daughter Sam works as well, while also running a small flock of poultry. The farm is Ann Marie's passion, and she feels as if she is living her second childhood. Ann Marie was elected to the RIFB Board of Directors in 2017.

Meet the RIFB Board, October Edition, cont.

Peter Gavitt, of Turf Inc. in North Kingstown, started working at McBurney's Potato Farm in South Kingstown in 1968 at the age of 14. In 1972 the farm was sold to a turf farm and Pete began working for them. He enrolled in URI's Natural Resources program in 1972, and by 1975 began working for Tuckahoe Turf. Pete was married in 1976 and graduated from URI's world-renowned Turf Grass Management program that same year. Pete became production manager at Tuckahoe farm, and left in 1978 with the goal of revitalizing Turf Inc. He and his wife bought the business out in 1982, starting with just 22 acres; Turf Inc. now owns and operates 400 acres.

Turf Inc. markets both wholesale and retail, and while they do not install, they do provide recommendations for installation. Word of mouth has been their best sales tool, in combination with a good location right across from Scharfner Farms on Rte 2.

Pete was elected to the Board of Directors in 1996. He is a past president of New England Sod Producers, and is a member of TPI (Turf Producers International) RI and New England Nursery Association.

Pete has two children. His daughter, Cody, started mowing at the farm at the age of 10 and now owns and operates a 18 horse boarding facility where she provides dressage lessons. Cody is the mother to Pete's twin grandsons. Pete's son, McKay, graduated from Roger Williams University in Business and helps in production on the farming operation.

Update your Agritourism Activities with RIFB

Governor Raimondo has launched a Take It Outside initiative aimed at getting people outside in the fresh air to enjoy activities. We realized in addition to needing commodity updates from most farms, we don't have good agritourism activities listed for many of you.

Do you offer PYO? Hayrides? A corn maze? Let us know so we can update our lists in the RIFB database. Email your activities to rifarm@rifb.org or call the office at 401-385-3339.

Continue to Receive the Printed Newsletter.

RIFB plans to stop sending the printed version to our **Friend of Farmer** members as of the January edition. We want to be conscious of waste and costs, but we are happy to continue to mail a printed copy to any of our members that request it. Please call the office and speak to Rebecca to be placed on the **Printed Newsletter list** to receive your free newsletter by mail.

Current **Full-Time** and **Part-Time Farmer** members will continue to receive a mailed copy unless you request digital copy only.

Farmers- Do you have something to sell or trade?

Are you looking for a particular implement or service? Do you need seasonal or full-time help or are you someone looking for a summer or full-time ag related job?

The New England Ag Exchange Website is a collaborative effort between Farm Fresh RI, the Young Farmer Network, RI DEM Division of Ag and the RI Farm Bureau. It provides an online forum to buy/sell/trade, share advice, seek/offer land or labor, and more.

Visit <https://exchange.farmfreshri.org/> to see how it can help you!

President's Corner

On June 22, RI Farm Bureau contacted RI DEM regarding the state's drought plan when it became apparent that we were heading into a serious drought. Years of agricultural and weather observations showed me we were headed down a path we've been down before. The irony of this is that we are coming off two extremely wet years, and a spring that was also wetter than normal. Yet by June we were beginning to see signs of impending drought. There has been an extremely steep decline in precipitation combined with Rhode Island's hottest summer on record. Even I did not take enough precautions for drought, applying fertilizer which was followed by no rain. On a cautionary note, there may not be enough ground moisture to establish a cover crop this fall.



With the urging and hard work of RI Farm Bureau, and Farm Service Agency Director Dr. W. Michael Sullivan sounding the alarm, discussions with farmers have continued and programs from USDA FSA are triggered by this drought level. The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) are both available at this time. Additional information about the Emergency Loan Program is available on RIFB.org along with USDA fact sheets. A critical eligibility factor is if the producer has filed an 'acreage report' with the Agency. If you have not, be sure to file one next year so that you will be eligible for these USDA programs. Please remember to read all contracts and applications carefully. Any error in your paperwork may require you to return the funds.

Per RI DEM: Pond maintenance such as dredging out accumulated sediment is generally an exempt activity not requiring a permit and may be an important response to drought conditions. The exemption pertains to farmers who meet the definition in the wetlands act and must be done in accordance with good management practices. Please contact Howard Cook of the Division of Agriculture at howard.cook@dem.ri.gov or (401) 222-2781, Ext. 4504.

As I write this, 80% of Rhode Island is in a level D3 Extreme Drought, with areas expected to reach Level D4, Exceptional Drought, by the end of this week. The Drought Steering Committee, at its September 10 meeting, voted unanimously to send a letter to the Governor recommending a declaration of extreme agricultural drought. The experts say that this dry trend will continue through at least early winter.

Finally, I'd like to remind you all of the importance of voting this fall. This may be the most important election since Abraham Lincoln's 2nd Election for the continuation of our republic.

Henry B. Wright III, President RIFB

USDA to Provide Additional Direct Assistance to Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by the Coronavirus

Expansion of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Began Sept. 21

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is implementing the **Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2)** for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. Signup for **CFAP 2** began September 21 and run through December 11, 2020.

CFAP 2 payments will provide eligible producers with financial assistance that gives them the ability to absorb some of the increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. USDA has incorporated improvements in CFAP 2 based from stakeholder engagement and public feedback to better meet the needs of impacted farmers and ranchers.

Additional commodities are eligible in CFAP 2 that weren't eligible in the first iteration of the program. CFAP 2 payments will be made for three categories of payment calculations:

- **Sales Commodities**, including specialty crops, tobacco, and aquaculture, use a sales based approach, where producers are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales.
- **Price trigger commodities**, including row crops, livestock and dairy, are major commodities that meet a minimum 5-percent price decline from January through July.
- **Flat-rate row crops** that do not meet the 5-percent price decline trigger or do not have data available to calculate a price change will have payments calculated based on eligible 2020 acres multiplied by \$15 per acre.

A complete list of eligible commodities, payment rates and calculations can be found on farmers.gov/cfap.

Producers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages with the team at the FSA county office. All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only.

Rhode Island producers interested in applying for CFAP 2, or having questions, can contact the USDA Rhode Island Farm Service Agency County Office located at 60 Quaker Lane Warwick RI Suite 49 at 401-828-3120, Option 2.

All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in the office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

#StillFarming

RI Farm Bureau

16 B Nooseneck Hill Rd
West Greenwich, RI 02817

Phone: 401-385-3339
Fax: 401-385-3394
E-mail: rifarm@rifb.org
Web: www.rifb.org



Thank a farmer 3 times a day!

CALLING ALL FFA AND 4-H MEMBERS!



JOIN RI FARM BUREAU FOR FREE

Just a reminder that all 4-H and FFA Members can join RI Farm Bureau for free, and receive all the benefits our other members receive including discounts at thousands of businesses nationwide.

Our 4-H and FFA Members are the future of agriculture and we encourage you to join, either online at RIFB.org, or by calling the office at 401-385-3339.

