

# Rhode Island Farm Bureau Newsletter



## Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and the 2022 Legislative Season

**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)** has been hitting the US Poultry Industry hard this year. With the first confirmations of infection in US Domestic Poultry on February 8, 2022, this hard-hitting virus has been detected in 229 flocks in 29 states as of April 22, with over 31 million domestic birds affected. There have been 763 confirmed cases in wild birds in 33 states as of April 19. Of the New England states, only RI and VT have not had domestic poultry infections confirmed. New England detections have included 15 backyard flocks, but also numerous wild bird confirmations in all but Rhode Island. The virus spreads primarily through fecal droppings and respiratory droplets, and can contaminate feed or water sources that wild birds have access to. Wild birds often have immunity, domesticated poultry do not and are very susceptible to this easily transmittable disease. Wherever possible, protect your free-range poultry by keeping them indoors, feeding and watering birds indoors and preventing access to areas where poultry could come into contact with wild bird droppings. Rodent control will also help as they can physically carry the disease into a well-protected area. Mice can fit through a hole the size of a dime or a space 1/4" wide, and that's not a typo.

The front page of the RI Farm Bureau website ([rifb.org](http://rifb.org)) contains links to many resources to find updates about HPAI, and to reiterate the importance of biosecurity. (Visit our website to click on these helpful links.) Basic biosecurity involves keeping visitors to a minimum at your farm, particularly those who may come in contact with other flocks. Wash your hands after handling poultry. Wear boot covers or have a footbath for cleaning boots before and after visiting the farm. It is also imperative that any tools, equipment, or vehicles are cleaned and disinfected before being moved to another property. These are good normal biosecurity practices for any farm, but even more important now. If you have sick or dead birds, report them to Dr. Scott Marshall, RI State Veterinarian by calling 401-222-2781 X2774503.

Now for our typical April/Spring Newsletter update on legislation. This year we have once again seen quite a few pieces of legislation that would negatively affect agriculture in Rhode Island. One of the clearest is the reappearance of a Senate bill to "exclude the cultivation and processing of cannabis from the definitions of plant agriculture contained in the Rhode Island zoning enabling act". Cannabis is a plant, and the cultivation of it is indeed agriculture. This is repeat legislation that in past years sought to exclude "marijuana". Changing the word "marijuana"

Volume 23, Issue 2

Spring 2022

### Board of Directors

Henry B. Wright III, President  
Kevin Breene, Vice President  
Susanna Camacho, Treasurer  
Tim Gallagher, Secretary  
Ann Marie Bouthillette  
Vincent Confreda  
Brenda Frederickson  
Peter Gavitt  
Jean Helger-Bento  
Donald Hopkins  
Maggie LaPrise, Young Ag  
Chair  
Edwin "Scooter" LaPrise  
Joe Polseno  
Bill Stamp III  
Rob Swanson  
Louis Vinagro III  
Tyler Young

Heidi Quinn, Exec. Director  
Rebecca Whitford,  
Administrative Assistant

### Inside this issue:

HPAI and 2022 Legislation	1-2
Young Ag Professionals BBQ!	3
Participate in our Farm Products Raffle	7
President's Corner	10
The Zipline	11

to “cannabis” would therefore remove the ability to grow industrial hemp. We need to remember that while not a traditional farm crop, marijuana cultivation is still agriculture, and we need to support the legal cultivators of this crop.

Companion legislation seeking to make the use of neonicotinoids state-limited use is also back. Once again, RI Farm Bureau and several farmers testified in opposition to this legislation, explaining the benefits of “neonics” as opposed to older pesticides they needed to rely on in years past. Because neonics were an effective and safer option, not requiring a pesticide license, many farmers have let their pesticide licenses lapse. RI Department of Environmental Management and the Division of Agriculture regulate pesticides in the state, and RIGL § 23-25-9.3 states that “the director (of RI DEM) shall be guided by EPA regulations in this determination”. The EPA is now tentatively looking at a late 2022 publication timeline for the interim decisions (IDs) on the neonicotinoids. Policy decisions on pesticides must be drawn from sound science. RIFB has once again submitted testimony requesting that the state waits until the experts at the EPA have completed their review.

One of the most concerning trends for agriculture, and quite frankly all of us, are the number of bills with the goal of switching vehicles, power equipment, lawn care devices (H 7786), homes, and businesses to all electric power. Nothing has been left untouched by these pieces of proposed legislation. While there are many applications where electric power or electric batteries may be a useful option, it is not realistic to think that in their current capacity, battery powered equipment would be a reasonable substitute for large property or commercial use of leaf blowers, lawnmowers, chainsaws, etc. to say nothing of electric power for tractors and other large farm equipment. Another bill, H 7374, would provide that no city or town would issue a permit for the construction of new buildings that are not an all-electric building (for initial permit applications after December 31, 2023), this even includes your cooking appliances. Discussions about making all small engines electric, which would include generators, and the reality of power outages due to hurricanes and winter storms in our region leaves us wondering how you can manage with an electric backup to your electric power in an outage situation. The question of how renewables could keep up with a fully electric state is one we at RI Farm Bureau have real concerns about.

Finally, if you have experienced difficulty with obtaining a new or renewed **Farm Tax Exempt Certificate**, or with the **T-59 Fuel Tax Refund** form, please reach out to us at the Farm Bureau office for assistance.

Farm Bureau members receive **\$500 EXCLUSIVE CASH REWARD\***  
ON ELIGIBLE NEW SUPER DUTY®, F-150, RANGER OR MAVERICK

FORD SUPER DUTY FORD F-150 FORD RANGER FORD MAVERICK

BUILT Ford TOUGH

Visit [fordfarmbureauadvantage.com](https://fordfarmbureauadvantage.com) today!

Computer-generated image with available features shown.

**We value our long-standing partnership with Farm Bureau and are proud to offer you exclusive savings.**



\*Farm Bureau Exclusive Cash Reward is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. \$500 Exclusive Cash Reward on the purchase or lease of an eligible new 2021/2022/2023 Ford Maverick, Ranger, F-150 or Super Duty®. This incentive is not available on F-150 Lightning, F-150 Raptor, F-650 and F-750 Super Duty®. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford Motor Company private incentives or AXZD-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase or lease and take new retail delivery from an authorized Ford Dealer's stock by January 3, 2023. Visit [FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com](https://FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com) or see your authorized Ford Dealer for qualifications and complete details. Note to dealer: Claim in VINCENT using #38326



**Join us for a fun evening of good food and games at the  
historic Fry Farm in East Greenwich!**

The RIFB Young Ag Professionals are putting on a Chicken BBQ and you're invited!  
Tickets available only until Monday, June 13! Get your tickets now !

Call the RI Farm Bureau Office at 401-385-3339 to pay by CC and have a ticket emailed or  
stop by the RIFB office to purchase a ticket— just call first to make sure we're open.

Sizzlin', smokin' and satisfying

# **RIFB YOUNG AG PROFESSIONALS CHICKEN BBQ**

**June 18th**

**tickets**

**\$25**

children 10 and  
under option

**\$10**

Event starts at 5:30 at the Fry Farm In East Greenwich  
Good food, good people, and a good time for a good cause!

Call the Farm Bureau office for tickets  
**401-385-3339**  
Visit [rifb.org](http://rifb.org) for more information.



THE GREAT STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



## 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. For more information, and to connect with a local American National agent near you visit [an.insure/rifb](https://an.insure/rifb) or call 800-899-6519.



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.

20-050-334583.V1.6.2020

## American National/Farm Family Insurance Update

**As of January 1, 2022:**

RIFB Membership is no longer required to obtain an American National/Farm Family Insurance policy, however, RIFB membership **is required** to obtain the Farm Bureau discount.

For **new** policies, the discount is available only to the Part-Time and Full-Time Farmer levels. If you are a current RIFB Friend of Farmer member receiving the Farm Bureau discount, you will continue to get the discount so long as you do not allow your RIFB membership to lapse. If you do not renew your membership, you can only re-obtain the discount by renewing at the Part-Time or Full-Time Farmer level. RIFB recommends that you contact your insurance agent to determine if you are receiving any discount which will be affected by not renewing your RIFB membership. RIFB would like to remind all of our members that you are an important part of our organization

**Your current Rhode Island Farm Bureau membership may entitle you to discounts of:**

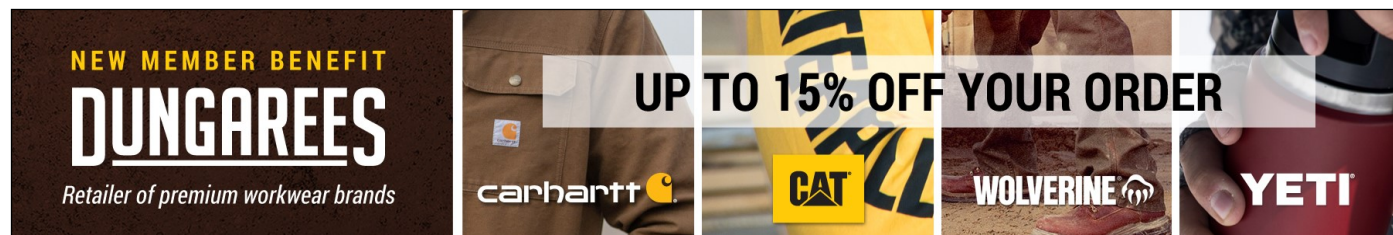
- 5% discount for personal auto
- 3% discount for the SFP, including Country Estate Insurance
- 3% BOP discount up to \$100. (Certain classes not eligible for the discount, ask your agent.)

### Fifteen-Acre Farm For Sale in Cumberland, RI

2,000 Sq. Ft, three-bedroom, two-bath home. Two barns, one with a studio apartment above. Property has pastures and two ponds.

\$1,495,900. Contact Albert Plante, Friendly Farm at (401) 439-2458 or [morezac@aol.com](mailto:morezac@aol.com) for more information.

View listing at: <https://liladelman.com/listing/30-burnt-swamp-rd-cumberland/>



**Call the Farm Bureau Office to get the Dungarees Discount Code!**





# IT PAYS TO BE A CUSTOMER- OWNER.



**This year we paid \$91 million in patronage dividends.**

Farm Credit East is customer-owned, which means customers share in the association's financial success. This year, qualifying borrowers received \$91 million from our 2021 earnings. That's equivalent to 1.25% of average eligible loan volume and adds up to \$1 billion since our patronage program began.

Discover the difference. No other lender works like Farm Credit East.

[farmcrediteast.com](https://farmcrediteast.com) | 800.327.6785

Loans & Leases  
Financial  
Record-Keeping  
Payroll Services  
Profitability Consulting  
Tax Preparation &  
Planning  
Appraisals  
Estate Planning  
Beginning Farmer  
Programs  
Crop Insurance

**2022 RIFB Farm Products Raffle**  
**3 Chances to Win— Just \$5 a ticket or 5 tickets for \$20!**  
**Proceeds to benefit our RIFB Scholarship program**

**Three prizes: \$500, \$300 and \$200 in RIFB Member Farm gift certificates.** RIFB will be purchasing the gift certificates for this popular raffle from our member farms, so if you offer gift certificates at your business and would like to be included in our **2022 RIFB Farm Product Raffle**, please call the office at 401-385-3339 or email [rifarm@rifb.org](mailto:rifarm@rifb.org). We will once again purchase primarily \$25-50 Gift Certificates depending on the average product values of a location. We'd love to get a nice balance of member farms offering produce, fruit, meat, flowers, plants, syrup and/or honey, and any other products which you may grow or produce. (If you sell food items, you must have the proper permits to do so for us to include you in our raffle.) We will once again be selling tickets at our RIFB booths at Washington County Fair August 17-21 and hope to sell a lot of tickets there!

In addition to raising money for our scholarships, given out each fall at our RIFB Annual Meeting, our RIFB Raffle helps publicize our member farms and gets people out to shop at farms they may not be aware of. For that reason, we want to involve member farms from **all areas of Rhode Island**. After the product availability issues of the past two years brought about an increased focus on local products, we think the time is right for lots of interest in the local farm products raffle! If you would like to participate, please contact us by **May 30** so that we can make our final decisions. There will be small info sheets available to detail all the participating farms. If we have more interest than we have funds to purchase gift certificates this year, we will be happy to place any other farms on a waiting list to start off in 2023.

**RI Farm Bureau offers free Notary Services.**  
**Please call the office @ 401-385-3339 before coming in.**

# Let's Get To Work.



**35 Locations to Serve You in the Northeast!**

1055 E. Main Rd. • Portsmouth, RI  
**(401) 683-0002**



**UNITED**  
Ag & Turf





**Ashley Johnson**  
Agent– Licensed in CT, MA & RI

780 Victory Highway, Unit 1  
West Greenwich, RI 02817

401.397.1050

[Ashley.Johnson@american-national.com](mailto:Ashley.Johnson@american-national.com)

**Your ad could be here for just \$75/issue!**



Contact Heidi or Rebecca at the RIFB Office to learn more about advertising opportunities in the quarterly newsletter. **401-385-3339**

## The #1 Reason People Don't Join Farm Bureau?

**No one asked.**

**Not a member of RIFB?**

**Know someone who should be a member?**

Full-time farmers, part-time and hobby farmers, landowners, gardeners, foodies and anyone who enjoys local food and farms in Rhode Island– you can join RI Farm Bureau and help us to support the future of agriculture in RI and beyond. We have a number of membership levels– find one that suits YOU!

You can stop by the office to join or renew, or join or renew online at [rifb.org](http://rifb.org).

## DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU NEED A CONSERVATION PLAN?



### WHAT IS A CONSERVATION PLAN?

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

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

Funding has been secured for a limited number of plans. Contact us today to assure you are approved for this special offer before all slots are filled.

**You can get a \$950 valued plan for only \$100 under special project funds!**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR DISTRICT:

**Eastern Conservation District** (Bristol & Newport Counties):  
Sara Churgin, [schurgin.ericd@gmail.com](mailto:schurgin.ericd@gmail.com) | 401-934-0840

**Southern Conservation District** (Kent & Washington Counties):  
Gina Fuller, [gfuller@srccd.org](mailto:gfuller@srccd.org) | 401-500-0422

**Northern Conservation District** (Providence County):  
Gina DeMarco, [gdemarco.nricd@gmail.com](mailto:gdemarco.nricd@gmail.com) | 401-934-0840



**Southern Rhode Island Conservation District**



The RI Conservation Districts are working with NRCS to write Farm Conservation Plans for the Farm Forest and Open Space (FFOS) Program of Rhode Island. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

## Update your Farm's Commodities

We get calls and emails at the office asking about hay, Christmas trees, CSA offerings, etc. Please take a moment to send us an email at [rifarm@rifb.org](mailto:rifarm@rifb.org) or call the office at 401-385-3339 to update your commodity listing with us. If you'd like to review what commodities we currently have listed in our database for your farm, Rebecca will be happy to look that up for you and update if needed. This will help us to identify specific farms and growers when the need arises. If you happen to have a seasonal or "at-the-moment" offering such as hay, silage or seasonal items, give us a call and we will put you on our list of farms to call if a request comes in.

## Volunteer Opportunities on the Farm?

We also get the occasional request for a farm where someone can volunteer. Perhaps it is a young adult or a retiree, and many farms just aren't set up for that. Unskilled labor can take time from some operations, but if you would like to be on our list of farms an interested volunteer can reach out to, please let us know.



# ATTENTION RI FARMERS AND AG-BUSINESS OWNERS



The cost for renewable energy systems such as photovoltaic solar panels and wind microturbines has come down significantly in recent years. And now, there are many new ways to deploy solar and wind projects on farms and rural small businesses. Today's solar is a whole lot more than some panels on your roof! But, with all these changes, you may not feel you know enough about these systems to decide whether any of them might be right for your farm or business.

## The Rhode Island **RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** can help you.

The Rhode Island Renewable Technical Assistance Program is ready to help you evaluate the potential for solar or other types of renewable energy system on your site *at no cost to you* — and your participation in this program takes only four hours of your time spread over a 10-week period.

*However, you must apply to determine your eligibility.*

Only 26 to 30 eligible farms and businesses can be chosen to participate in this program, and acceptance is on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Find out how you can reduce your farm energy costs!

**Apply TODAY by contacting**

**Margaret Lee** of [EnSave.com](http://EnSave.com)

**800-732-1399**

[MargaretL@ensave.com](mailto:MargaretL@ensave.com)

**Tell Margaret you want to apply for the  
Rhode Island Renewable Energy Technical Assistance Program.**

---

This program is being funded by a USDA Rural Development grant with the goal of assisting local farmers and small rural business owners explore their operation's potential to benefit from renewable energy. RIRC&D has partnered with EnSave to offer this program to farms and businesses throughout Rhode Island. If you don't already know EnSave, they are one of the nation's leading providers of agricultural energy systems design and analysis, and they work with farms across the country to reduce energy costs for farmers and rural small businesses and technical feasibility of implementation of those systems for their farm or rural small business.

---

## President's Corner

I was pleased to be able to attend the AFBF Convention in Atlanta in January. In 2021 resolutions were completed over Zoom, and this was at best difficult. Many resolutions were carried over to 2022 leading to an exceptionally high volume of resolutions. AFBF streamlined it by not allowing amendments unless they had been submitted in writing to AFBF by December 31, 2021.

The biggest takeaway from the convention was landowner rights in general. The theme of the convention seemed to be the protection of individual and landowner rights. Equal Opportunities for farmers of all types (race, creed, gender and agricultural endeavors) was also a notably large part of the resolutions.



The most contentious subject was the selling of beef on the open market—auction sales vs contract production. For the most part, east of the Mississippi tends to have more auction sales whereas west of the Mississippi contract production is much more common. In the contract beef industry, there are basically only four companies to contract with and this leads to a lack of transparency.

Contracts are private and between an individual company and the producer they buy from. Auction house sales allow for producers to know what prices are before they ship, and while not ideal, they have the opportunity to buy back their own animals if their minimum price isn't met.

Much discussion was made in rewriting the stockyard and packers act to reflect the prices in the contracts. The bigger a producer is, the more leverage you have. Getting a higher price and allowing for growth. A smaller producer will often get a lower price, and this affects the ability to grow their business. At the end of the day, it wasn't clear what choice was best. In the end, delegates made the decision to retain the status quo, but only after much discussion and a close vote.

Senators Grassley and Fisher propose 50% be sold on the open market, which means the price is reported subject to the packers and stockyard act. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack wants to incentivize small packers to become medium. There are currently federal funds available, and possibly more to come, to incentivize small and medium packers to get them to grow, thereby creating a localized market system. Given world events, this might be the time to make this move. But can it be competitive? Can it continue to operate if the subsidies run out? Likely not. At this point, we are stuck with the current system, which will continue until other forces come into play. We need to have a return to pride in skilled labor, and transportation would need to become problematic thereby raising input costs for the Big 4 and making them uncompetitive.

The state presidents had a good, town hall-style meeting with Secretary Vilsack where they were able to ask direct questions. He was also a keynote speaker at convention. Secretary Vilsack discussed the availability of money for cover crops and the funding for small and medium processing plants.

As the world situation is changing, we are seeing high input costs of fertilizer and energy. The use of no till whenever possible will help to keep the cost of inputs down. It can lower costs of fuel, man hours, loss of nutrients and moisture in the soil, and cut down on herbicide and pesticide use. No till can give as good or higher production as tillage. Try to always have a cover crop on unused ground. The more you can use nitrogen fixing cover crops (legumes) the less plant food needs to be added to the soil. This is true whether you have a backyard garden or are farming acreage. New varieties of hairy vetch and clover are two cover crops that should be considered.

*Henry B. Wright III, President RIFB*

---

## The Zipline: Inflated Prices Hitting Farm Country Too

By Zippy Duvall, President, American Farm Bureau



We are all feeling the pressures these days of rising costs, from the grocery store to the fuel pump. Most Americans are already making adjustments here and there. Some might drive less, take a family vacation closer to home, or cook a few more meals rather than dining out. But finding small ways to save can only go so far when your very livelihood depends on goods that keep getting more expensive, sometimes skyrocketing in price. When you need to plant crops, tend to them and care for animals to keep the farm running, you have to find a way to make it work, and many American farmers are hoping to at least hold on until relief in the supply chain comes.

As a beef and poultry farmer, I am a price taker—and that's the same story for farmers of all commodities across the country. Most consumers don't know that the higher prices they're paying in the grocery store these days, don't mean higher profits for my farm or yours. This year's input cost spikes have been tough, but they are also part of the bigger story of the rising cost of farming. For livestock farmers in particular, business costs have increased 46% since 2013—those costs include animal care, feed and seed. Today, those costs continue to rise and with supply chain disruptions, you also have to pray that your farm supplies will arrive in time.

The story isn't much better for farmers growing row crops either. While market prices are high for crops like corn and soybeans, the higher costs for seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and fuel make it tough to balance out. It's also too early to tell if prices will keep up with farm costs or be swallowed up.

I know everyone is feeling the strain of rising costs, but where it hits differently on the farm is our inability to set prices. A restaurant might adjust its menu and raise prices to keep up, or reduce hours and staff, but those adjustments just don't work on the farm. Whether you're growing grains, raising livestock or growing fruits and vegetables, you don't set the price you'll receive at harvest unless you're directly marketing your products, and that price can change from the time you're planning and planting to harvest time. There are no slow times on the farm or margins to reduce employee time. What's more, you can't control when your equipment might break down or worse when a storm or natural disaster might sweep in.

Farmers and ranchers rise to these challenges each day because we are grounded in our commitment to feed our families and yours. But the pressures of rising farm costs—from seeds to equipment—are front of mind in every region right now, and providing relief in the supply chain must be a top priority for our nation. At Farm Bureau, we have been calling on the Administration to address the skyrocketing costs of fertilizer, remove import duties, free up port congestion and increase efficiency across shipping channels. Our team of economists are following market impacts closely and will continue to provide analysis as farmers and ranchers adjust their budgets to keep up. The pressures that keep you up at night on the farm, keep us up looking for solutions and advocating on your behalf here in Washington. We will weather this storm together, as we work to keep our nation's food supply secure and our farms strong.

The importance of food supply self-sufficiency has become crystal clear in recent weeks as more and more people understand the connection between food security and national security. The cost of farming may be high, but as global events remind us, the cost of losing America's farms would be even greater.

**#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](mailto:rifarm@rifb.org)  
Web: [www.rifb.org](http://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](http://RIFB.org), or by calling the office at 401-385-3339.

