



## Massachusetts Farmers Address Questions About Livestock On Boston Common

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS - June 28, 2017 - Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) members brought their livestock to the Boston Common on June 20 to answer legislators' and consumers' questions about the care and management of livestock.

During these interactions, farmers and MFBF staff discussed bills of importance that they are supporting this session. Those bills included:

HB 3323 - An Act to establish estate tax valuation for farms, Representative Hogan  
SB 1584 - An Act to establish estate tax valuation for farms, Senator O'Connor-Ives

- Massachusetts has an estate tax that is levied when the value of an inherited estate exceeds \$1 million. The estate tax is based on the "highest and best use" of the land - typically the development value, rather than the ag value.
- This has proven to be a challenge for many farmers inheriting farmland, who want to continue to farm the land rather than develop it. Often, they do not have cash on hand to pay the estate tax and are forced to sell some or all of the land to do so.
- This bill would value farmland at agricultural value for estate tax purposes. The land would need to remain in agriculture for at least 10 years to fully enjoy this benefit. If the land is developed within 10 years, back-taxes would need to be paid as well as an Elevated capital gains tax.



HB 441 - An Act to promote the care and well-being of livestock, Representative Kulik

- Creates a Board within the Department of Agricultural Resources consisting of farmers, local humane organizations, veterinary organizations and relevant state agencies.
- The Board will be charged with ensuring livestock is treated humanely, and will be given the ability to create relevant regulations, guidance, etc.
- The bill is intended to ensure that future policy regarding the humane treatment of livestock is based on science and broad consensus.

"We are pleased that this annual event was well received," said MFBF President Ed Davidian, who farms in Northborough. "The farmers who attended helped disperse our message to the crowds in Boston. Through events like this one, we are educating legislators and the public about bills that are critical to maintaining farm profitability in the Commonwealth."

Ice cream that was served during the day was provided by Davidian Bros Farm in Northborough and Cooper's Hilltop Farm in Rochdale.

To learn more about MFBF's policy priorities, please visit: <http://www.farmbureau.co/legislative-priority/>.

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*The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation is a non-profit organization representing nearly 6,000 family members across the Commonwealth. MFBF is an advocate for farmers, run by farmer members who develop policies through its grassroots process. Its mission is "to protect the rights, encourage the growth, and be of service to its members, in the best interest of agriculture."*

*For more information about the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, please visit [www.mfbf.net](http://www.mfbf.net).*

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