



MFBF Young Farmers Update

Leading Farm Bureau into the Future

Ag Day at the Statehouse is March 27

Make plans to join us on March 27, 2018, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. for Ag Day at the Statehouse. This annual event brings together farmers and agricultural organizations to showcase locally-grown food and farm products and to have their voices heard by legislators about issues affecting the agricultural community.



The Young Farmer and Rancher (YF&R) committee will be present that day, focusing its efforts on H.B. 3915, which would create an ag value for inherited farmland. Please see the key talking points on the bill below.

HB 3915- An Act to establish estate tax valuation for farms - Rep. Hogan

- * 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 agricultural 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 is contrary to the intent of several state laws and programs intended to preserve farmland.
- * 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.

Any farmer can take part in Ag Day and there are lots of opportunities anyone who wants to be part of it to do so.

You can meet with your State Representative and Senator. Most legislators want to know their constituents and are happy to meet someone in their district who they can speak to about agriculture when they need to. If you don't know who your legislator is, you can find out at <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>.

All you need to do is stop by their office and drop in. Farm Bureau staff at the registration desk can help you with directions. If your Senator or Representative isn't in, you might meet with an aide. However, that's still an important connection - both for their office and you.

There's also a general reception in the Hall of Flags where locally grown food from all around the state is served. It's intended to be an opportunity for farmers, legislators and staff to mingle and talk. Some of the most useful conversations with legislators happened over apple pie.

To view a map of the statehouse to help you find your way around, please click [here](#). For information on how to talk to legislators, please click [here](#).

The YF&R committee will also have a table next to the registration desk, where you can find information on how a bill goes through legislature and more. If you are in attendance that day, please drop by!

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to YF&R Chair Heidi Cooper at cooper.heidi.jo@gmail.com or MFBF Director of Marketing & Membership Katelyn Parsons at katelyn@mfbf.net.

Maggie - The New Mascot!



With all of our travels, MFBF's YF&R decided to get a mascot (pictured left). With help from Facebook, we decided to name her Maggie! This is a combination of Massachusetts and agriculture.

Thank you to everyone who participated - and stay on the look out for Maggie on her travels!

Please Participate In Our Poll!

This summer, in late June, we are



planning a tour of Hunt's Farm in Orange, Massachusetts. Hunt's are a diversified operation with products ranging from dairy to sweet corn and pumpkins to solar. Additionally, at the conclusion of the tour we can have a summer get together at the local sports complex that Hunt's partner with. To help us narrow down dates that work best for people, we've created a Doodle poll, here:

<https://doodle.com>

[/poll/ehp8nuxa2csp2nfe](https://doodle.com/poll/ehp8nuxa2csp2nfe). **If you**

would like to participate in this tour, please complete the poll by March 1 to let us know your date preferences!



Fundraiser Ideas Needed



We ran a very successful fundraiser at the 2017 annual meeting in Framingham. However, we still need more ideas on how to raise funds from outside MFBF's membership base. If you have any ideas, please email Heidi at cooper.heidi.jo@gmail.com or Katelyn at katelyn@mfbf.net. Any ideas or thoughts are appreciated!

2018 YF&R Tentative Calendar

February:

Feb. 16 - 19 - AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference, Reno, Nevada

March:

March 10 @ 11 am - Tour of Maple Corner Farm in Blandford (March 17 is snow date)

Wednesday and Thursday March 13 and 14: Outreach at the State FFA State Convention, Sturbridge

Week of March 19 - Tour JP Bartlett's Wholesale Greenhouse in Sudbury

March 27 - Ag Day at the Statehouse

April:



Thursday, April 5 at 4 p.m.: Signal Rock Farm, Charlton
Monday, April 9 at 7 p.m.: Forgotten Farms Screening, Leicester
April 25: Carlson Orchards, Harvard

May:

Livestock on the Common preparation at end of month, site unconfirmed

June:

June 6 (tentatively) - Livestock on the Common, Boston

Future:

Nov. 29 - 30 - MFBF Annual Meeting in Framingham

To add to this we still have Harvest for All activities and fundraising opportunities to nail down; stay tuned!

American Farm Bureau Federation Information

American Farm Bureau Federation's Competitions and Challenges

If you are interested in participating in any of these competitions, please email Katelyn at katelyn@mfbf.net. She will let you know when applications become available for next year's competition.

American Farm Bureau Federation's Achievement Award

The Achievement Award recognizes Young Farmers & Ranchers who have excelled in their farm or ranch and have honed their leadership abilities to superiority. Participants are involved in production agriculture with a majority of their income subject to normal production risks. Judges evaluate competitor's excellence in management, growth and scope of their enterprise and self-initiative that have been displayed throughout the farm or ranch.

American Farm Bureau Federation's Excellence in Agriculture Award

The Excellence in Agriculture Award spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agricultural enthusiasts but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years. Competitors are evaluated on their understanding of agricultural issues, leadership experiences and achievement, and their ability to communicate their agricultural story.



American Farm Bureau Federation's Discussion Meet Competition

The American Farm Bureau Federation Discussion Meet competitive event simulates a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each participant. This competition is evaluated on an exchange of ideas and information on a pre-determined topic. Participants build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

American Farm Bureau Federation's Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge

The Farm Bureau Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge is the first national business competition focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs working on food and agriculture businesses. Rural entrepreneurs pitch innovative business ideas to a team of judges with expertise in business development and agribusiness. These business owners compete for \$145,000 of startup funds.

To learn more about MFBF's YF&R programs and upcoming events visit mfbf.net

Don't forget to find us on [Facebook](#). We are looking at increasing our following and look forward to having young farmers around the state "hijack" the page over the summer to share their farm stories.

Invite your family and friends to follow us!

Stay Connected



Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, Inc, 249 Lakeside Ave, Marlborough, MA 01752

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