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Maine Farm News



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February 20, 2021

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Maine Farm News

Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch: New Publication

Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch spotlights innovative, SARE-funded research into a range of conservation options including soil management, such as using compost, conservation tillage and cover crops; plant management, featuring crop rotation, water-conserving plants and rangeland drought mitigation; and



water management strategies such as low-volume irrigation and water recycling.

[See the full resource here](#)



Cover Crop Species Selection Tool Released for Northeast Growers

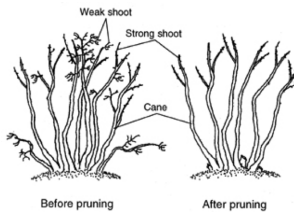
The Northeast Cover Crop Council just released the new [Cover Crop Species Selection Tool](#). This project was a collaboration among experts throughout the region to provide region and growing zone specific data. The tool is designed to help farm decision makers find cover crops species that meet your farm conditions and goals. Find the best cover crops for your farm with the [NECCC Species Selection Tool](#).



Northeast Cover Crop Council Annual Conference

[The Fifth Annual Northeast Cover Crop Council Conference](#) is scheduled for **March 4th**. The conference will include presentations from cover crop specialist and experienced farmers. This year's topics include; Interseeding Cover Crops, Improved Seeding Methods, and Innovative Farmers' System overviews. There will also be moderated topic discussion sessions to connect with other farmers and researchers about your interests with cover cropping.

[See the full agenda and register here.](#)



Blueberry Pruning

A reminder from David Handley, UMaine Vegetable & Small Fruit Specialist: time to start pruning blueberries. Here's a [short video on how to prune blueberries](#).



["Harvesting Maine" video series to launch — participants wanted!](#)

Dear Maine Agricultural Producers:

"Harvesting Maine," a new video interview series, helps people meet Real Maine members. The series of casual video interviews launches spring 2021. It showcases farmers, growers and producers who work to make a variety of Maine agricultural products available and accessible year-round.

If you're a Real Maine member with first-hand experience in Maine agriculture, and you're willing to showcase your work to help people learn why agriculture matters — consider this opportunity!

FSMA's Proposed Rule for Food Traceability – Comment Deadline of February 22, 2021

When the Food Safety Modernization Act was originally passed in 2011, it included a direction from Congress for the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to propose additional recordkeeping requirements to enable better traceability through the food chain.

This Proposed Rule for Food Traceability would apply to all firms that manufacture, process, pack, or hold foods on the Food Traceability List unless otherwise specified in one of the exemptions. You do not need to be covered by another part of FSMA to be affected by this proposed rule.

The Proposed Rule for Food Traceability is published in the [federal register](#) and is [open for comment](#). On that site you'll also find [publicly submitted comments](#) they've received so far. [More info here.](#)

Small Bites: Good Ideas Without the Hard Work

What can I do in February to bring peace of mind and lower my stress level in May, June and beyond? When the busy days of spring and summer arrive, I feel great comfort in looking at a checklist as a reminder of what tasks need to be done on a regular schedule in different areas of our farm. Developing new checklists and logs is an annual winter activity. Activity logs that track cleaning, watering and temperatures let me know that protocols have been attended to. I am more able to delegate details when I have a checklist to refer to before and after the task. Most farmers have logs for pesticide applications and animal mortality, as required by law and different certifiers. Might there be other activities and events that you would like to capture?

Placement of Logs

For us, the key to logs seems to be placement. Having a fertilization log hanging by the hose shutoff in the greenhouse makes sense.

Data is a Balancing Act

To have value and provide value data over time, logs be kept up, so make sure that entering into logs is part of the various job descriptions and daily expectations you communicate to your employees. Needless to say, there is such a thing as too much tracking, so make sure you don't overtax your workplace with data collection that isn't useful and/or necessary.

Checklists and logs are quick and easy ways to get lots of information to and from co-workers.

They can be a key management tool in improving communication in your farm business.

Looking for ideas for what to track and where to keep your logs? [Farm coaching](#) can help you set up a plan for this season.

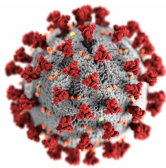
Meetings - Webinars - Upcoming Events

Sessions preceded by * are eligible for Pesticide Re-certification Credits.

- **Tuesdays through March 30: [Plant Production Lunch & Learn Series for Green Industries](#)**
- **Feb. 22, 2 pm [Invasive Species: Management Priorities](#)**
- **Feb. 23 to March 15 [Maine Food Convergence](#)**
- **Feb. 23, Noon [Resolving Challenging Issues through Agricultural Mediation](#)**
- **Feb. 23, 1 pm *[Rats and Other Vermin Control on the Farm](#)**
- **Feb. 23, 2 pm [Invasive Species: Federal Agency Updates](#)**
- **Feb. 23, 6 pm [Hobby Fruit Trees](#)**
- **Feb. 24, 7 pm *[Educational Update for the Ag Industry: Potato Diseases](#)**

- Feb. 24 to Mar. 17, 4 pm *[UMaine Wild Blueberry Conference Series](#)
- Feb. 24 & 25 [The Biennial Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trades Show](#)
- Feb. 24, 12:30 pm [Solar Array Grazing](#)
- Feb. 24, 2 pm [Invasive Species: Aquatic Nuisance Species](#)
- Feb. 25 1 pm* [Getting Event More out of your Cover Crops- Veg and Fruits](#)
- Feb. 25, 2 pm [Invasive Species: Plant Health](#)
- Feb. 25 3:30 pm [High Tunnel Fertility Research Update: UMass Ext.](#)
- Feb. 25 to Mar. 25 Noon* [Lunch and Learn In-Service Training for Ag Service Providers CCA](#)
- Feb. 25: [Stressors and Resources for Farm/Ranch Families with Disabilities](#)
- Feb. 25 to Mar. 18, 6 pm [Intermediate Beekeeping: Apiary Management](#)
- Feb. 26 *[UVM 3rd Annual Industrial Hemp Conference](#)
- Feb. 26, 2 pm [Invasive Species: Show Me the Money!](#)
- Feb. 27, 6 pm [Teamster Roundtable: Draft Horse Care and Harnessing](#)
- Mar. 1 [Smartphone Photography & Social Media Strategies w/Kelsey Kobik](#)
- Mar. 1 [Deadline to donate an item for the MBPA Scholarship](#)
info@mainebeefproducersassociation.com.
- Mar. 3 to Mar. 17 * [North Country High Tunnel Series: UNH](#)
- Mar. 2 [Hiring Your First Farm Employees](#)
- Mar. 4 [Northeast Cover Crop Council Annual Conference](#)
- Mar. 9 [Opening Your Farm to Visitors and Controlling Liability](#)
- Mar. 11, 23, & 30 [Compost Webinar Series: Noontime Seminars](#)
- Mar. 17 [Soil Steamer Virtual Workshop](#)
- Mar. 20 [Maine Cattlemen's College - access to virtual sessions starts](#)
- Apr. 10 [Grafting Fruit Trees](#)
- May 8 [Top Working Fruit Trees](#)

Resources



COVID-19 Resource Hubs

- [UMaine Extension Agriculture COVID-19 Resources: Farm and Seafood Directory, U-Pick Best Practices, COVID-19 FAQ's, and More!](#)
- [DACF COVID-19 Resources, Guidance and Mandates](#)
- [USDA Federal Rural Resource Guide](#)
- [Local Food System Response Resource Hub](#)
- [DACF Mental Health Resources](#)



Fact Sheets, Videos, & Guides

- [Guide to Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, Entrepreneurship, Conservation, Food Systems, and Community Development](#)
- **NEW!** [Farmers Guide to In-Kind Wages](#)
- **NEW!** [New England Floral Greenhouse Guide \(pdf\)](#)
- **NEW!** [Establishing New Commercial Fruit Crops for Northern NY: Juneberry, Honeyberry, Aronia, and Elderberry. \(pdf\)](#)

Positions Available

- [UMaine: Assistant Extension Professor and Fish Nutrition Specialist.](#)
- [UMaine: Research Assistant Lowbush Blueberry Research & Extension Program](#)
- [MDACF Environmental Specialist \(Pesticide Inspector\) Piscataquis & Penobscot Counties](#)

Payments, Grants & Loans

- [Conservation Reserve Program Signup Extended](#)
- [Value-Added Producer Grant Due March 16, 2021](#)
- [Multi-Business Dairy Agritourism Grant Due March 16, 2021](#)
- [Rural Energy for America Program Loans & Grants Due March 31, 2021](#)
- [Northeast SARE's Partnership Grant Due April 13, 2021](#)
- [United Farmer Veterans Value Added Producer Grant](#)- While Funds Last
- [Free RFID Tags for Cattle through MDACF - Donna.flint@maine.gov](#)

Surveys



Attention Cut Flower Growers and Florists: Your Input Needed

Information from this survey will help develop new marketing strategies that will help all Maine cut flower producers. University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) and Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) staff are assisting with this project. Survey responses will be collected until Sunday, February 21.

[Take the cut flower producers survey](#)
[Take the florist and designers survey](#)

The information gathered from these surveys will be shared Feb. 24th
[Sign up for the February 24 session for Maine flower producers](#)



[Sheep Producers Survey - NAHMS Needs Your Help](#)

The United States Department of Agriculture National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) is seeking stakeholder input to help shape the objectives for an upcoming sheep study that will take an in-depth look at the most pressing health issues facing the sheep producers. Interested stakeholders can provide

input through March 31, 2021 [at this survey link](#). An incorrect link was included in the last newsletter.

Inquiries regarding the survey or NAHMS sheep studies may be sent to NAHMS@usda.gov.



[Bird Damage in Sweet Corn Survey](#)

Researchers at the University of Rhode Island are currently distributing an online survey about fresh market sweet corn. If you grow fresh market sweet corn you are eligible to take this short 5 minute online survey. Your participation and feedback are extremely valuable to the success of this research.

The survey will gather information on growers bird damage levels to sweet corn and prevention methods used to deter bird damage. [Take the survey here.](#)

Information for Animal Keepers

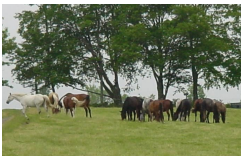


[Rats and Other Vermin Control on the Farm](#)

Rats, mice, and other rodents can infest grain and livestock feed and make it un-sellable and un-usable as feed. Wildlife such as raccoons, fox, and weasels can invade poultry houses and kill and maim birds. Pastured animals are subject to predation by a number of wildlife species.

UMaine Extension is sponsoring this Zoom session on February 23rd at 1 pm to 3 pm with Kathy Murray, IPM Entomologist with Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (MDACF), along with Adam Vashon, Wildlife Biologist with USDA Animal and Plant Health, Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services.

[Register here for this program.](#)



[Granite State Grazers Winter Learning Series](#)

Join us for a 9 session weekly Wednesday webinar on a multitude of aspects of farming, animal husbandry and sustainable grazing. The Granite State Grazers have partnered with regional organizations to offer a Winter Learning Series.

Starting Wednesday, February 3rd and going through March 31st, we will offer lunch time short (1-2 hour long) FREE webinars on a diverse subject matter.

Choose one or choose them all!

- Feb. 24 Solar Array Grazing
- Mar. 3 The 2020 Grazing Season, Hello 2021
- Mar. 10 Stress Free Handling
- Mar. 24 Soil Health Research
- Mar. 31 Ruminant Nutrition (not even 101)
- Apr. 7 Grass Growth and Nutrition
- Apr. 14 Management
- Apr. 21 How NRCS Can Help You



Artists Flock to Build a Better Wool Market

One of the best ways to save critically endangered livestock and poultry is to create a market for their products. Increasing awareness and demand for products made from heritage breed animals makes conservation economically viable for the farmers who raise them. Launched in February 2019, The Livestock Conservancy's **Shave 'Em to Save 'Em Initiative** continues to dramatically impact the financial success of rare breed shepherds by putting sheep back to work on the farm.



Livestock Nutrition Webinar Series Recordings

Recordings of past programs:

[Beef Nutrition with Dr. Colt Knight](#)

[Small Ruminants with Dr. Colt Knight](#)

[Swine Nutrition with Dr. Colt Knight](#)

[Poultry Nutrition with Dr. Colt Knight](#)

[Processor Expectations with Dr. Colt Knight](#)

USDA Ag Marketing Service

- [National Beef Prices](#)
- [National Retail Conventional and Organic Comparison Fruits, Vegetables & Meats](#)

Visit UMaine Extension Agriculture Website

STAY CONNECTED:



Veterinary Lab

Plant Disease
Lab

Insect Lab

Soil Testing Lab

Publications

Tick Lab

Edited by:

Donna Coffin, Extension Professor,
donna.coffin@maine.edu

Jason Lilley, Extension Professional,
jason.lilley@maine.edu

Rebecca Long, Extension Professional,
rebecca.j.long@maine.edu

Tori Jackson, Extension Professor,
tori.jackson@maine.edu

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Photos by Edwin Remsberg and others.

A message to our stakeholders:

As a valued UMaine Extension stakeholder, we just wanted to let you know that most *county offices have reopened following UMaine guidance and protocols to stem the spread of the coronavirus. Each office may have different protocols in place, please call ahead before coming to the office. Please contact [UMaine Extension staff](#) with any questions.*



University of Maine Cooperative Extension: Penobscot County

307 Maine Ave Bangor, ME 04401 207-942-7396 or 800-287-1485

[Visit Our Website](#)

University of Maine Cooperative Extension: Piscataquis County

207-564-3301 or 800-287-1491

Donna Coffin - Voicemail 207-262-7726

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