Title: Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing

Leader: Ruth Hazzard

Overview

Vegetable farming in Massachusetts and New England has remained vital in recent decades through constant and creative change: more direct marketing, diversification, selection of high value crops, and adoption of new technologies. The twenty thousand Massachusetts acres used to produce vegetables (worth over $80 million in farm-gate value and over $240 million retail value) are a resource for food, open space, environmental quality, economic vitality, and quality of life in the Commonwealth. Vegetable farmers are key players in the state’s 100 plus farmers markets, 150 farm stands, 50 plus Community Supported Agriculture farms, and the wholesale food distribution system. Dairy, livestock and fruit farmers are diversifying by growing more vegetable crops.

Sustainable vegetable production requires new technical solutions to problems of cropping systems and rotations, crop nutrition, soil health, water use and conservation, energy sources and needs, and pest management. As Massachusetts undergoes cultural, economic and climactic changes, both new and established growers must learn to use practices that are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable, and to adapt cropping systems to new market opportunities in Massachusetts. The Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing project will undertake research and extension to address key problems and opportunities facing the industry and the public.

Project: Sustainable Vegetable Production: Production and Marketing of World Crops

This comprehensive program provides research-based information to commercial farmers and agricultural professionals on all aspects of the production and marketing of vegetable and herb crops popular among distinct immigrant groups in the Northeastern United States. It also works with the UMass Nutrition team to provide culturally appropriate nutrition education to Spanish and Portuguese-speaking communities in Massachusetts.

Activity Summary - 2014

- Provide production and marketing support to commercial farmers producing ethnic crops (30)
- Research at UMass Research Farms on production and marketing of world crops (3)
Total educational contacts for all projects

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Adult Contacts</th>
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<tr>
<td>In Person</td>
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<td>Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)</td>
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Collaborating Organizations

- NRCS
- Regional New England Extension Educators
- Eastern Massachusetts CRAFT
- South Eastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnerships SEMAP
- New England Vegetable and berry Growers Association NEVBGA
- Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources MDAR
- Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture CISA