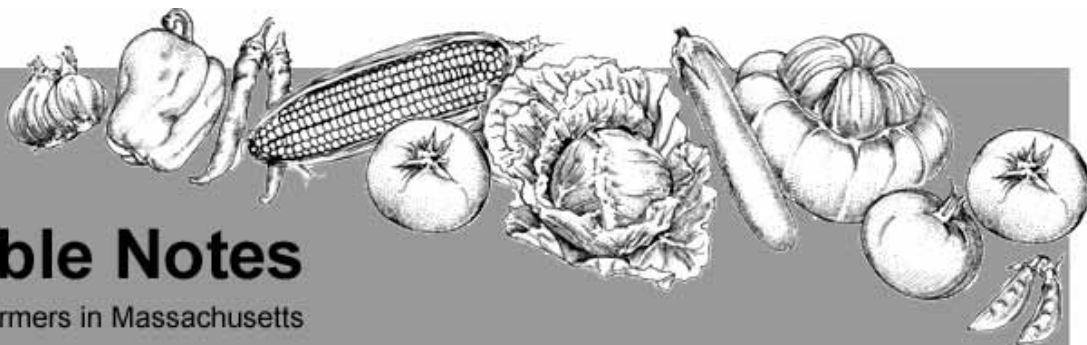




UMASS  
**EXTENSION**



# Vegetable Notes

For Vegetable Farmers in Massachusetts

Volume 20, Number 1

February 4, 2009

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## **NEV&BGA AND EXTENSION WINTER MEETING**

**Saturday, February 7, 2009 Waltham, MA**

### **Ag Conservation Model for Land Preservation**

- Rit Schartner, Schartner Farm, Exeter RI

### **Fertilizers: Usage; Materials; Soil Testing; Drip Fertigation: How to Mix.**

- John Howell, NEV&BGA

### **Update on Weed Control: How to Use Newer Materials; Problem Weeds Such as Galinsoga**

- Rich Bonanno, University of Massachusetts

### **Farm Slides**

- Dave Tuttle, Tuttle Farm, North Berwick, Maine

### **Specialty Crops Research**

- Frank Mangan

## **Cucurbit Crop Diseases - Testing Irrigation Water Sources for Phytophthora, New materials, Resistance to Fungicides**

- Rob Wick, University of Massachusetts

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY ON THE FARM**

February 17-18, 2009 Fairlee, VT

### **February 17: Vegetable Oil Production and Use on Farm - 9:00am to 5:00pm**

**Energy Analysis of the Farm** – What are the opportunities for energy efficiency and renewable energy on your farm? Greg Strong, Spring Hill Solutions, LCC, will talk about cost and benefits of energy work, what other farmers are up to, where to find support, and how to make the best energy decisions for your farm.

**Canola and Sunflower Crop Production** – Derek Crompton, University of Minnesota, will discuss sunflower and canola production, and their research with feeding meal to dairy cows. He will also discuss the ongoing research on use in tractors as a fuel.

**The Cost of Producing Your Own Fuel** – Seth Fore, Univ. of Minnesota, has worked extensively with the cost analysis of producing oilseed crops, and using them as both biodiesel and SVO. He will also present on the net energy balance of small-scale production and how that compares to that of large-scale facilities.

**So You Want to Make Biodiesel** – Many farmers have found that they can improve farm sustainability by producing biofuel. Matt Steiman of Dickinson College will discuss the basics of biodiesel production, as well as important safety practices and environmental considerations applicable to small producers.

**Growing Your Own Fuel** - Local Farmers, Roger Rainville, John Williamson, and Dorn Cox have been working towards development of on-farm fuel facilities. The farmers will share experiences growing oilseed crops,

equipment needs, and even potential for a mobile processing unit.

**Running/Adapting equipment on Biodiesel and/or Straight Vegetable Oil** – This workshop focuses on converting standard Beckett oil burners to run on straight vegetable oil. Paul Schmidt (Burlington) will include principles of a siphon burner, conversion, troubleshooting and maintenance and touch on issues with running B100 in an unmodified burner.

**February 18, 2009: Biomass and the Rest - 9:00am to 5:00pm**

**Biomass Fuel Systems for Heating Greenhouses (or Buildings)** – Vern Grubinger, UVM Extension, will describe some of the pros, cons, and costs of using corn, coal, waste vegetable oil, biodiesel, wood pellets or cord wood, based on farmer experience.

**Producing and Packaging Corn for Corn Stoves** – Bill Llywelyn, Five Point Farm, grows and markets about 2,000 tons of shell corn for fuel. Bill will describe the equipment they use to do this and what they have learned about the crop and the customers. Paul Boivin, Vermont Golden Harvest Biofuels will provide an overview on what is involved with processing corn for heating and will touch on capital start-up costs for developing a corn fuel business.

**Potential for Energy Production from Cropland in New England** - John Jemison, Peter Sexton (Univ. ME) and Sid Bosworth (UVM) will review the potential for energy crops in our environment: grass hay, canola, soybean, sunflower, barley, oats, and corn.

**Small Scale Solar Hot Water and PV at Sunrise Farm** - Chuck Wooster will discuss the 3.4 kW, grid-connected solar array that provides 60% of the farm's (and farmhouse's) annual electricity needs, as well as a solar hot water system that supplies the house.

**Wind Power on the Farm** – Jack Lazor, Butterworks Farm will share his story of constructing and operating a windmill on a dairy farm. He will describe the benefits as well as the perils and pitfalls of wind energy on the farm.

**20 kW Wind and Solar PV on the Farm** - Glenn Cook, Cider Hill Farm, has 3 Bergey 10kW wind turbines, a 10kW Evergreen solar panel array, and 3 outdoor Central Boiler hydronic wood furnaces producing up to 2.5 million btu to heat 3 homes and 10 greenhouses.

**How to Secure Funds for On-Farm Renewable Energy** - A panel of local organizations will discuss availability of funding from local and federal sources to develop and integrate renewable energy on your farm.

Registration is \$25, due by February 25th. See <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/RenewableEnergyontheFarm2-09.pdf> for more details and registration info. For questions about the conference or registration by phone or email contact Heather Darby, UVM Extension (802) 524-6501 or [heather.darby@uvm.edu](mailto:heather.darby@uvm.edu)

## **HARVEST NEW ENGLAND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW**

**February 24th - February 26th, 2009**

**Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, Massachusetts**

- Keynote speaker Mel Allen, Editor of Yankee Magazine
- Two pre-conference workshops - Market Managers Session or Regional Agritourism
- A full trade show featuring the latest agricultural products and services, including specialty food producers showcasing unique local products perfect for roadside stands.
- Optional half day farm tours
- Over 20 breakout sessions with topics such as food safety, energy conservation, agritourism, understanding retail, working with the media, and more!

To register online and for the latest conference updates visit [www.harvestnewengland.org](http://www.harvestnewengland.org).

## **GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAPS) FOOD SAFETY TRAINING**

**March 4, 2009 9am to 4pm**

**UMass Collaborative Services Facility (CSF), Shrewsbury, MA**

Foodborne outbreaks linked to fresh produce have increased in recent years. To address this issue, UMass Extension, the Department of Nutrition and the MA Department of Agricultural Resources have teamed up to implement a USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Food Safety Training for growers and other fresh produce handlers. This event will take place at the UMass Collaborative Services Facility (CSF), Shrewsbury MA on March 4, 2009 from 9am to 4pm.

At this training, you will learn more about bacteria associated with fresh produce, strategies for controlling food safety hazards in all phases of production and USDA Third-Party GAP Audits. You will receive a GAP manual, a certificate of participation, and one pesticide credit for participation. Featured speakers include Wesley Kline, Ph.D., a GAP expert from Rutgers University and Cooperative Extension; David Nyachuba, Ph.D., UMass Extension and the Dept of Nutrition; and Richard Bonanno, Ph.D., UMass Extension Agricultural Resources Program.

The cost of this training is \$35.00. Registration is required. For more information and to register, contact David Nyachuba at 413-545-0552 or [dgn@nutrition.umass.edu](mailto:dgn@nutrition.umass.edu).

## **WHOLE FARM SUCCESS STORIES BY THREE EXPERIENCED FARM COUPLES**

**A Three-Day Advanced Farmer-to-Farmer Workshop for Vegetable Farmers**

**March 11, 12 & 13, 2009**

**United Methodist Church; Corner of Henning & 5th Avenue; Saratoga Springs, NY**

**Presented by the Sustainable Farmers Network**

Three exciting days of presentations and group discussions by three highly experienced and successful farming couples. The theme of the workshop will be on the methods used on each of these diversified farms that make them profitable and successful. Topics will focus on soil health, cover crops, rotations, marketing, and production relating to bed systems, weed control, cultivation, harvesting procedures, and managing employees. Come and enjoy great food prepared with lots of local organic products, the company of friends old and new, and a lively and engaging learning environment. This workshop is designed for all levels of farmers with any size farm and any type system (conventional, organic, sustainable, etc.). This workshop will also offer special 20 minute "Earn Your Meal" presentations by other successful farmers attending the workshop, and there will be extensive networking/group discussion time.

Participants MUST pre-register. Please register early – space is limited. Registration costs \$175 per person, and includes an informative conference binder, morning refreshments, and lunch & dinner during the conference. A second additional person from the same farm will receive a \$25 discount. To register call 518-638-6501 or (preferably) send an email to [sparnold@capital.net](mailto:sparnold@capital.net).

## **AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN MASSACHUSETTS**

Do you need help sorting those piles of receipts and to-do-lists into meaningful information to make informed plans for the future?

- Are your current enterprises on the farm not yielding a sustainable income, and do you need to know what to do next?
- Is your family preparing for a changing of the guard from one generation to a new one?
- Can you qualify for the loans you need?
- Are you thinking you may be farming material, but do you wish you had a feasibility review for your ideas before you invest your money and valuable time?

Then come and gather with your peers for a few evenings in a friendly setting with professional guidance to develop some measurable plans for your farm enterprise! These courses are taught by folks who have seen what works and what doesn't on many farms. The peer group in each session is also a valuable resource – farmers and/or hopeful farmers learn best from each other when given the excuse.

No pizza shop plug-in business plans here. No online template you fill in mindlessly and regret later. This is YOUR idea explored with others who speak the same language, and who will continue to support your efforts beyond the end of the classes.

## **HOW DOES THIS WORK?**

Signup is still open for two learning formats in 2009. Courses are sited around the state wherever enough participants let us know they want a course. We love to work with local/regional ag organizations - at no cost to them other than some help with recruiting and site logistics.

1) For New Farmers – Take “Exploring Your Small Farm Dream” (Explorer) for those contemplating or just beginning a new farm enterprise. MDAR partners with the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) to offer this very popular 4 session “litmus test” to see if you should start your farm now, wait a bit, keep your day job, or move on to a different idea. We expect to offer a session this year in late winter 2009 in Southeastern MA and another location to be announced. Fee is \$125 per business. Signup is November through February.

2) For those “in between”, we offer a new guided workbook format called “The Small Farm Planner “. If you took Explorer and need some more input before you jump in – or if you have recently moved from “hobby” to “intend to make a profit” over the past year but you haven’t quite nailed down all the specifics that give you full confidence – “Planner” is for you. We will meet for a kick-off session and hand out the self-guided workbook. Additional meetings to share progress and thoughts can be scheduled as needed, with a “wrap-up” session about four months later. In the interim, the facilitator will be available by email for ongoing support. This is a pilot year for us with Planner, and we don’t know exactly how it will evolve. So we will offer it for the cost of the materials plus a modest fee - \$100 total. Since minimal travel is needed for this guided-workbook format, we will offer the pilot only in Western MA. This course will begin in Fall 2009, allowing time for those interested to enroll in and complete Explorer, (see above) which is a pre-requisite. If you are farther along and don’t need Explorer as a course, you can meet the pre-requisite by obtaining the Explorer workbook from NESFI or DAR, and complete it on your own before Planner begins.

Why not sign up for something “free”, or that only takes an hour or two in a seminar? Our courses are not one-shot wonders or cursory overviews with fill-in-the-blanks “business plans”. They don’t provide one-size answers from a book. The software doesn’t think for you. Our Instructors and Facilitators put lots of extra time into each individual enterprise to help you clarify your goals and how you might reach them. You will get proportional return on your personal investment. We find that farm businesses that make a moderate investment of time and money in a significant course go on to demonstrate the commitment needed to get results.

Note: These courses are supported by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and first priority for enrollment is given to residents and/or farm operations located in the Commonwealth. All courses are located in state and are not available on line.

Please call or email (preferred) to make your interest known and to get questions answered.

We will send you an application and additional information as soon as you request it!

Contact: Rick Chandler, MDAR, 25 West Experiment Station, UMass, Amherst, MA 01003 Phone: 413-577-0459 Fax: 413-577-3820 email: rchandler@umext.umass.edu

## **START PLANNING NOW FOR YOUR FARM’S CONSERVATION NEEDS WITH NRCS**

Sign-up is continuing for federal conservation programs under the 2008 Farm Bill and a conservation plan is required in order to participate. If you own or manage farm or forest land, contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office soon to begin the planning process.

NRCS conservation professionals will discuss with you your conservation objectives, help you identify resource concerns and suggest alternatives for treatment. They will also identify conservation programs that may provide you with financial assistance for implementation of certain practices.

New conservation provisions in this Farm Bill (the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008) simplify existing pro-

grams and create new programs to address high priority environmental protection goals. For example, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) now includes more forestry practices. In Massachusetts, financial and technical assistance through EQIP is available to help greenhouse operations with water quality and conservation practices.

For more information, contact the NRCS office at your local USDA Service Center. USDA service center locations are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## **OTHER UPCOMING MEETINGS**

### **Feb. 6-7. NH Farm and Forest Expo**

Manchester NH

For more information go to: [www.nhfarmandforestexpo.org/](http://www.nhfarmandforestexpo.org/)

### **Feb. 9. VT Vegetable and Berry Growers Annual Meeting**

Montpelier VT

For more information and directions go to: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/09%20Montpelier.pdf>

### **Feb. 10-12. NY Fruit and Vegetable Expo**

Syracuse NY

For complete program and registration information, go to <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/expo/>

### **Feb. 14-15. NOFA-VT Winter Conference**

Randolph Center VT

For more information go to <http://www.nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference>

### **Feb. 15. Technical Workshops for Growers at NOFA-VT Conference**

More conference info at: [www.nofavt.org](http://www.nofavt.org) or call 802-434-4122 or e-mail [info@nofavt.org](mailto:info@nofavt.org)

### **Feb. 16. Elliot Coleman's Winter Growing Workshop for Advanced Growers**

9am-2pm, at Vermont Technical College

Pre-registration is required; contact NOFA at 802-434-4122 or [info@nofavt.org](mailto:info@nofavt.org)

### **March 14. Growing Grains in Maine**

Saturday, March 14, 2009 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

MOFGA's Common Ground Education Center Unity, Maine

For more information see <http://www.mofga.org/Programs/Events/SpringGrowthConference/tabid/190/Default.aspx>

### **March 19. Vermont Winter grain Growers Conference**

Contact: Erica Cummings, (802)524-6501 Ext. 209 [eecummin@uvm.edu](mailto:eecummin@uvm.edu)

*If you would like to become a Vegetable notes sponsor, please contact Jessica Dizek at [jdizek@outreach.umass.edu](mailto:jdizek@outreach.umass.edu) or 413 545 1445*

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