.

Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association

**Winter/Spring 2023**

**MVSFGA Briefs**

**MVSFGA Facebook Page & Website**

The Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association Facebook page and website are now being managed by Tomi Ricker. Tomi has done a great job of updating it and keeping our online information current. Check it out, and remember to like our page. [www.MVSFGA.org](http://www.MVSFGA.org) is back and better than ever.

**New Board Members**

Charles Hunnewell from Hunnewell Farms LLC in West Durham is our newest board member. Charles owns and operates his family farm and grows a variety of mixed vegetables. Hunnewell Farms has a roadside stand and an online store where patrons can shop from. Charles brings years of experience in the field and is an asset to the board.

**Spring Twilight Meeting**

Stevenson’s Farm 271 Tucker Road, Wayne on 6/6/23 at 5:30pm. Rain Date 6/8/23.

Stevenson’s farm is well known for their strawberry production which is a large part of their operation. In addition to the strawberries, they also produce a lot of mixed vegetables/fruit including corn, pumpkins, watermelon, melons, tomatoes, and peas. They offer pick your own on strawberries, peas and pumpkins. Much of what they produce is sold through there retail stand on Rt. 202 in Winthrop Me.

**How it all started**

It all started on Berry Road in Wayne, Maine in the 1970’s. Ford and Susan Stevenson started growing strawberries for their pick-your-own strawberry business.

In 2005, fresh out of college, Tom Stevenson returned to the farm. Tom expanded the farm by growing a wide range of fruit and vegetables. Ford and Tom opened Stevenson Farm Stand in Winthrop in 2008 as their first joint venture.

In 2015 Tom and his father Ford were able to successfully transition ownership to the next generation. Ford was able to retire, and Tom and his wife Ashley purchased the farm. Often a hurdle for many generational farms. Tom now runs the farm with his wife Ashley and their three children: Hadley, Hannah and Ford.

**Tradeshow Recap**

The 82nd annual State of Maine Agricultural Trades Show was sponsored by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. It typically takes place every January and is a place for farm, agricultural and related sectors to network and connect around business needs and trends. Producers and consumers alike visit this three day show to get professional expertise, learn about technologies and to gather information on the agriculture industry.

The event offers promotion opportunities for agricultural service providers, equipment and supplies, and organizations to exhibit on the trade show floor. It also includes a conference offering presentations about current topics, research and business trends, certification courses and annual meetings focused on agriculture, natural resource management and food systems.

MVSFGA had a successful two days of classroom sessions where pesticide credits were earned both days for participants. There were many valuable talks covering a range of topics including Vegetable/fruit trials, PFAS and Board of Pesticide updates, reading your soil test and soil moisture, sprayer calibration, labor panel, irrigation panel, farmers markets, and selling produce to Hannaford. A big shout out to Maine Cooperative Extension along with MVSFGA for making this possible.

**Maine Vegetable and Fruit School 2023 (Cancelled due to a lack of registration)**

The Maine Vegetable and Fruit School for 2023 was set to run on March 29th this year in Augusta. This day-long school is sponsored by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association. Lunch will be provided. Credits: There will be two pesticide applicator training credits for this school. Certified Crop Adviser credits (CEUs) are also available. See link for full agenda and to register.

https://extension.umaine.edu/highmoor/upcoming-events/maine-vegetable-and-fruit-school/

**Hygienic Equipment Design for Vegetable Growers**

This workshop is hosted by Chris Callahan, UVM Extension Associate Professor: Agricultural Engineering; the Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (DACF); the University of Maine Cooperative Extension; and Bell Farms.

The workshop will go over hygienic design & evaluation, cleaning & sanitizing, writing Standard Operating Procedures, as well as hands-on equipment evaluation. We will be working with a green bean sorter, harvest totes and worktables, and possibly a potato wash/pack line.

This will take place on Thursday April 6th. This is limited to 24 participants, so don't forget to register soon! Participants will get 2 pesticide applicator recertification credits. The link to sign up is:

https://extension.umaine.edu/register/product/hygienic-equipment-design-for-vegetable-growers/

**Pesticide Registration Update**

The last semi-official update on the chemical registration update we had from Glen Koehler did not look amazing. The registrations had started trickling in but there were many gaps left open for growers. Although I do not have the registrations or numbers to reference, I have talked to multiple representatives that have given encouraging words that companies are not happy but are registering products. By the end of the month, we should have most products available. When I know more, I will relay the information to members.

**Farm Spot Light:**

**Springworks Farm Lisbon ME.**

Springworks is the largest Aquaponic farm in the New England and produces a variety of organic lettuces. Springworks is located right in Lisbon Maine. Its founder Trevor Kenkel founded Springworks in his freshman year at Bowdoin. He created a proprietary aquaponic system that now produces over 1 million heads of organic lettuce each year. They have created sustainable farming year-round here in the Maine. This has led to a fresher product that is shipped directly to distribution centers and stores within hours of being harvested. Trevor and his team manage 18,000 square feet of greenhouse. They have expansion plans to bring the entire greenhouse grow space to 500,000 square feet over the next six years. By May of this year, they will have added phase 1 of the project that is a 40,000 square foot greenhouse. This phase alone will triple their production.

**What is Aquaponics?**

The easiest explanation of aquaponics is that fish and plants working together to help each other grow in a natural ecosystem where water circulates in an endless loop. At Springworks the fish that create our organic fertilizer are tilapia, a freshwater white fish that has become incredibly popular in recent years. They feed their fish nutritious food that they convert into organic waste. Their proprietary system pumps the wastewater out of their tanks, where it is filtered and refined before being pumped into our greenhouse where the plants absorb the nutrients they need to grow. In the process, the plants filter the water to the point where it’s so clean, they can pump it directly back into the fish tanks where the 100% organic process starts all over again. In the greenhouses their lettuce plants are on a floating raft system where the organic fertilizer is pumped into the greenhouses. Right now, Springworks harvest adult tilapia each week and ship them to Harbor Fish Market in Portland, one of the most iconic fish stores in Maine. At Springworks they produce over 60,000 pounds of tilapia annually. They are also working on getting a retail filet product in the future.

Springworks organic lettuces can be found at Hannaford Supermarkets, Whole Foods, Food City, Bow Street Market, Rosemont Market & Bakery, New Morning Natural Foods, On the Vine Market Place, Royal River Natural Foods, Bath Natural Market, Rising Tide Co-Op, Uncle Dean’s Natural Market.

Check out more about Springworks at: www.springworksfarm.com

**Membership:**

**Membership dues are due. Guides are also ready. If you need a guide mailed, please reach out to Bill Jordan. You can also pick up at the Spring Twilight Meeting.**

If you are a business and would like to be listed as a business member the dues are $75 and can be mailed through the link below. You will be highlighted in each of our newsletters. Along with being highlighted on the website. Business members will also receive the Vegetable Guide one year and Fruit Guide the following year.

If you haven't joined for this year, please mail this membership form:

https://www.mvsfga.org/\_files/ugd/193629\_143f74a58dbf49f0b7841d370a82bdc8.pdf

along with a check for $50 to:

 Bill Jordan

 21 Wells Road

 Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107

 whjjr30@aol.com

By paying your dues, you will be mailed a copy of the New England Small Fruit Management Guide, you will receive our newsletters, and you will be invited to our Spring and Fall Twilight meetings.

**Many Thanks to our Business Members:**

**Brookdale Farm** <http://www.brookdalefruitfarm.com/>
**Harris Seeds                      tlewandowski@harrisseeds.com**
**Nourse Farms** [https://www.noursefarms.com/](https://MVSFGA.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c80916ba2c1c7cc0d6f769b52&id=289bd75e0a&e=33eb49a6b5)
**Nutrien Ag Solutions          brain.mccleary@nutrien.com**

**Paris Farmer Union** timdonovan.pfu@gmail.com

**Seedway** lauchlin54@gmail.com

**Winslow Agriculture Consultants** alvin.winslow@gmail.com

**Swamp Yankee Crop Consulting pumpkinpaul1@aol.com**

**MVSFGA**

MVSFGA is an association of vegetable and small fruit growers dedicated to the promotion and advocacy of the vegetable and small fruit industry in Maine. MVSFGA supports research education, and promotion and political advocacy. The association has provided important testimony at legislative hearings on such issues as pesticide regulation, labor, IPM, farmland preservation and technology transfer.

MVSFGA members receive the annual New England Vegetable Production Guide, and the New England Small Fruit Production Guide. Members also receive the association newsletter. To become a member of the MVSFGA please write to; William Jordan Jr. Treasurer, 21 Wells Road, Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107,

email: whjjr30@aol.com

MVSFGA Directors are: Tom Stevenson (President), Paul Peters (Vice President) William Jordan (Treasurer), Tomi Ricker (secretary), Justin Gray, Bill Bamford, Matthew Manson, Ross Belanger, Charlie Rackley, Charles Hunnewell.