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Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association

**Fall 2020**

**August 2005**

**2003**

**President’s Message**

From what I’ve heard, many farms have had a very good summer season. It was a rough strawberry season for many, but those with other crops seem to have been able to make it up. There is a lot of trepidation for those who do winter markets as to what will happen going forward, especially with the recent increases in positive tests. Fingers crossed we are through all of this soon, it is certainly very wearing on each of us, our employees, and our customers. I think that most people are right at their breaking point now and have been so for a long time, but it is a challenge we will all continue to face, probably for the winter at a minimum.

A few of our farms (that I know of) have had employees with positive COVID-19 tests, and there are a few take-aways for all of us from their experiences.

If someone who works for you has a positive test you will get a call from the Maine CDC, in fact you will get many calls for the next two weeks. You will not end up in the newspaper as having had an “outbreak” for only one employee, which is certainly good news, and you do not need to shut down for one employee, which is also good news. None of our farms exceeded the threshold that would cause a shut down, so I do not know at what level of infection that starts.

The employee who tests positive must “isolate” for 10 days from the either the date of the test or the onset of symptoms, whichever was first. If, at the end of 10 days that person has been symptom-free for 24 hours, without meds, they can return to work. They cannot catch it again, at least in the short term, or be a carrier to transmit to others if they come in contact with it again.

The affected person is considered to have been contagious for the 48 hours prior to getting any symptoms, AND for the rest of the isolation period. Any employee or other person who has been within 6 feet of that person for 15 minutes or more is considered to have been exposed and must “quarantine” for 14 days. They can still work, and because we work in large, open fields, they can go work by themselves, away from the other employees, and still be considered to be in quarantine. There is no evidence of transmission on vegetables, but having them hoeing, weeding, transplanting, or similar tasks is probably a better choice than having them harvest. A sick employee in “isolation” cannot work or be around others.

The employee who is in isolation should still be paid for an 8-hour day for every day of work missed. When you do your quarterly filings, you are reimbursed for this as a reduction in how much federal taxes you pay for your employees. Your payroll provider will be familiar with this, but do it within the quarter of the illness. They will need a positive test result or a letter from the Maine CDC to qualify, simply “being sure you have it” doesn’t work for the reimbursement. This may be different for foreign workers. It is limited to the isolation period only.

Hopefully none of you will need to know any of that, but may sleep a little better having some solid information in case it does happen on your farm.

**Annual Agricultural Trade show to go virtual**

The annual Agricultural Trade Show will be virtual this year. The format for the programs and how each commodity will particpate is still in the process of being worked out. Many of us will be needing to get pesticide credits and the Board of Pesticides is determining how that will be worked out to give credits. Some talks will be live on a format such as “Zoom” and during the week of the scheduled show, while others programs will be on some format such as “YouTube” so that you will be able to watch these at your leisure. We will keep you posted as to how the MVSFGA is going to do it in a following newsletter along with times for the live talks. The schedule for now will include three talks live using “zoom” or some other app on your computer and three others will be on a different format such as “Youtube” which you will be able to watch at your leisure.

Remember if you are in need of pesticide credits this year the Board of Pesticides has a number of ways you can get these credits including videos you can watch online or they will send them to you along with a short test to comply with training requirements. You can contact the John Pietroski of the Board of Pesticides 207-287-7543 or [john.t.pietroski@maine.gov](mailto:john.t.pietroski@maine.gov) for more information.

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*Below is information from the Farm Service Agency regarding Covid grant money.*

*To qualify for this grant, the farm needs to of only been in business in 2019 and does not need to have necessary suffer losses from Covid 19.*

CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE

PROGRAM 2

**Sales Commodities**

Sales commodities include specialty crops; aquaculture; nursery crops and floriculture; other commodities not included in the price trigger and flat-rate categories, including tobacco; goat milk; mink (including pelts); mohair; wool; and other livestock (excluding breeding stock) not included under the price trigger category that were grown for food, fiber, fur, or feathers.

Additional commodities are eligible in CFAP 2 that weren’t eligible in the first iteration of the program. If your agricultural operation has been impacted by the pandemic since April 2020, we encourage you to apply for CFAP 2. A complete list of eligible commodities, payment rates and calculations can be found on [farmers.gov/cfap](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap).

Payment calculations will use a sales-based approach, where producers are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales.

* Up to $49,999 = 10.6%
* $50,000-$99,999 = 9.9%
* $100,000-$499,999 = 9.7%
* $500,0000-$999,999= 9.0%
* All sales over 1 Million = 8.8%

**Eligibility**

**Persons and legal entities also must:**

1. -commercially produce the eligible commodities;
2. -be in the business of farming at the time of application;
3. -comply with the provisions of the “Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation” regulations, often called the conservation compliance provisions;
4. -if a foreign person, provides land, capital, and a substantial amount of active personal labor to the farming operation; and
5. -not have a controlled substance violation.

Commodities grown under a contract in which the grower has ownership and production risk are eligible for CFAP 2.

There is a payment limitation of $250,000 per person or entity for all commodities combined. Applicants who are corporations, limited liability companies, limited partnerships may qualify for additional payment limits when members actively provide personal labor or personal management for the farming operation. In addition, this special payment limitation provision has been expanded to include trusts and estates for both CFAP 1 and 2.

Producers will also have to certify they meet the Adjusted Gross Income limitation of $900,000 unless at least 75 percent or more of their income is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities. Producers must also be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions.

**Applying for Assistance**

Producers can apply for assistance beginning Sept. 21, 2020. Applications will be accepted through **Dec. 11, 2020.**

Please contact your local FSA Office for an application package.

ANDROSCOGGIN/SAGADAHOC-------------753-9400

CUMBERLAND/YORK--------------------------- 883-0159

FRANKLIN------------------------------------------ 778-2788

FT. KENT--------------------------------------------- 834-3831

HOULTON-------------------------------------------- 532-9407

OXFORD---------------------------------------------- 743-5789

PENOBSCOT----------------------------------------- 947-3555

PISCATAQUIS--------------------------------------- 564-2151

PRESQUE ISLE-------------------------------------- 764-4151

SOMERSET------------------------------------------- 474-8323

WALDO------------------------------------------------ 338-1964

WASHINGTON---------------------------------------255-3612

# **Fixing Magnesium Deficiency in Plants: How Magnesium Affects Plant Growth**

Technically, magnesium is a metallic chemical element which is vital for human and plant life. Magnesium is one of thirteen mineral nutrients that come from soil, and when dissolved in water, is absorbed through the plant’s roots. Sometimes there are not enough mineral nutrients in soil and it is necessary to fertilize in order to replenish these elements and provide additional magnesium for plants.

## **How Do Plants Use Magnesium?**

Magnesium is the powerhouse behind [photosynthesis in plants](https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/children/photosynthesis-for-kids.htm) [1]. Without magnesium, chlorophyll cannot capture sun energy needed for photosynthesis. In short, magnesium is required to give leaves their green color. Magnesium in plants is located in the enzymes, in the heart of the chlorophyll molecule. Magnesium is also used by plants for the metabolism of carbohydrates and in the cell membrane stabilization.

## **Magnesium Deficiency in Plants**

The role of magnesium is vital to plant growth and health. Magnesium deficiency in plants is common where soil is not rich in organic matter or is very light. Heavy rains can cause a deficiency to occur by leaching magnesium out of sandy or acidic soil. In addition, if soil contains high amounts of [potassium](https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/plants-potassium.htm) [2], plants may absorb this instead of magnesium, leading to a deficiency. Plants that are suffering from a lack of magnesium will display identifiable characteristics. Magnesium deficiency appears on older leaves first as they become yellow between the veins and around the edges. Purple, red, or brown may also appear on the leaves. Eventually, if left unchecked, the leaf and the plant will die.

## **Providing Magnesium for Plants**

Providing magnesium for plants begins with annual applications of rich, organic compost. [Compost](https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/composting/basics/composting-basics.htm) [3] conserves moisture and helps keep nutrients form leaching out during heavy rainfall. Organic compost is also rich in magnesium and will provide an abundant source for plants.

Chemical leaf sprays are also used as a temporary solution to provide magnesium.

Some people have also found success with using [Epsom salts](https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/epsom-salt-gardening.htm) [4] in the garden to help plants take up nutrients easier and improve magnesium deficient soil.

**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](mailto:whjjr30@aol.com)

MVSFGA Directors are: Lisa Turner (President), Bill Bamford (vice-president),, William Jordan (Treasurer), Tomi Chipman (secretary), Tom Stevenson, Justin Gray, Paul Peters, Mathew Matson, Pete Karonis, and Harold Grams.

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