

President's Message-

The Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Grower's Association had a terrific two days of educational speakers at the Maine Agricultural Trade Show in January. This was our second year with two days of talks, and given the excellent attendance both days, it looks like two days at the Trade Show will be the norm going forward. I'd like to thank our sponsors one last time, many thanks to Nourse Farms, Harris Seeds, and Johnny's Selected Seeds.

The board will be planning next year's Trade Show talks in the end of March, so if you have some topics you'd like to learn about, please let us know by emailing me at Lisa@Laughingstockfarm.com. And mark your calendars for Tuesday AND Wednesday for next year's Trade Show!

In this newsletter you will find info on two upcoming herbicide/pesticide bills, plus the things I promised to email to you as follow ups from the Trade Show. Here's a list of topics, you'll have to scroll down to find them:

Legislative Update -

LD 1888 Prohibits herbicides where school children are, including field trips

LD 2083 Prohibits neonics in landscaping, which may include nursery stock and bedding plants

MVSFGA website

Vegetable School

Paper Bag Update

Recycling Greenhouse Plastic

Maine Vegetable and Berry Listserve

UMaine Mechanical Weed Control Data

Legislative Update -

It is always helpful to have people who would be directly affected by a bill go to Augusta and testify. You get three minutes to speak. Start with "Senator Dill, Representative Hickman, and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (or whichever committee is hearing the bill), my name is _____, and I am for (or against) LD _____, An Act to _____.

" Bring 20 copies to give to the committee clerk, plus one to read from. They may ask you questions (they usually don't) and the time to answer is not limited, so take a breath, think about how you want to answer, and take your time answering if you do get a question. When they see people show up who have taken time away from their busy lives to come and testify, they really do pay attention.

Thursday, February 6, 1 pm, Ag Committee, Room 214 Cross Building

LD 1888 "An Act To Protect Children from Toxic Chemicals"

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1354&item=1&snum=129>

Under this bill "a person may not apply herbicides ... that are nonselective, including, but not limited to, glyphosate, within 75 feet of school grounds." School grounds are defined as including an area "used by a school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program..."

This means that school field trips to pick your own operations or pumpkin/hayrides would be prohibited from using any non-selective herbicides, including Round Up. There isn't a time limitation on it, so it could read that if one EVER uses an herbicide within 75 feet of the school trip area, there could never be another school trip there. MVSFGA will be testifying against having the definition include a place where a field trip takes place.

Thursday, February 13, 1 pm, Ag Committee, Room 214, Cross Building

LD 2083 "An Act To Require the Board of Pesticides Control To Annually Publish Certain Information Regarding Pesticides and To Prohibit Certain Uses of Neonicotinoids"

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1484&item=1&snum=129>

This bill limits neonics for landscape gardening, which is not defined. It would include landscaped areas, but could potentially include nursery stock and bedding plants. If invasive species were found in a big way on landscape plants (Japanese Lantern Fly?) they would not be able to be controlled (with neonics) on landscape plantings without new rulemaking by the Board of Pesticide Control, which can take as long as a year. It specifically gives the BPC the right to make additional rules, which is a right that they already have.

www.MVSFGA.org -

We are working hard on the website, and experiencing a few hiccups. It should be up soon, and it will have as many of the talks from the Trade Show as we can get copies of. You can watch our Facebook page for an announcement when the website is live.

<https://www.facebook.com/mainevegetableandsmallfruitgrowersassociation/>

Vegetable School -

UMaine's Cooperative Extension is offering Vegetable School on:

Wednesday, April 8 at Keely's Catering in Portland

Thursday, April 9 at The Bangor Motor in Conference Center in Bangor

More Info here: <https://extension.umaine.edu/highmoor/2019/12/23/maine-vegetable-and-fruit-school-2020/>

Register here: <https://extension.umaine.edu/register/product/maine-vegetable-fruit-school-2020-in-portland-april-8-and-bangor-april-9/>

Agenda -

8:30 AM *REGISTRATION*

9:00 AM *Legislative Update*

— Julie Ann Smith, Executive Director Maine Farm Bureau

9:30 AM *Deep Mulching Compost for Crop Nutrition and Weed Management*

— Dr. Mark Hutton

10:00 AM *Irrigation Strategies to Maximize Effectiveness and Efficiency*

— Dr. Rachael Schattman

10:30 AM *BREAK*

10:45 AM *A View from the Plant Disease Lab Common and Uncommon Problems*

— Dr. Alicyn Smart

11:15 AM *Rasp Production in High Tunnels: Scaling Up in Quebec*

— Dr. David Handley

11:45 AM *LUNCH*

12:30 PM *Swede Midge and Leek Moth in Maine: New Threats to Crucifers and Alliums*

— David Fuller

- 1:00 PM *Growing Healthy Transplants: Best Greenhouse Practices*
— Dr. Matt Wallhead
- 1:30 PM *Transitioning the Farm: Getting Started*
— Dr. Leslie Forstadt
- 2:15 PM *BREAK*
- 2:30 PM *Ticks and Brown Tail Moths: Health Implications for Farmers*
— Griffin Dill
- 3:00 PM *Update on Risk Management Options for Fruit & Vegetable Growers*
— Erin Roche
- 3:30 PM *Emery Farm: Bringing Local Produce to Maine Schools*
— Trent Emery
- 4:00 PM *WRAP-UP & EVALUATION*

Paper Bag Update -

As of April 22, 2020, it will be illegal to use single use plastic handle bags, aka T-shirt bags.

The exact language is, "a retail establishment may not provide a single-use carry-out bag to a customer at the point of sale or otherwise make single-use carry-out bags available to customers."

A "retail establishment" is defined as, "a store, a restaurant or a temporary business." That would be our farm stores/ farm stands.

A "temporary business" is defined as, "a seasonal or non-permanent retail establishment such as a farmers' market or fair that sells merchandise including food, goods, products or clothing." There's the farmers' markets.

At your farm stand or farmers' market, you **MUST** use either a cloth bag, a 4 mil thick plastic bag, or a paper bag that is made of at least 20% post-consumer recycled paper and is itself 100% recyclable. You **CAN** still use those smaller, thin bags that people put individual items in.

Based on my discussion with DEP, it appears that you **CAN** use plastic bags outside for pick-your-own operations because it is not in a retail establishment, which is clearly defined as a store, and it doesn't seem to fall under the "temporary business" definition. I will update you if this changes.

I spoke with Julie Smith, the Executive Director of the Maine Farm Bureau. She thinks it is unlikely that we will be able to get any changes made to this law that this governor will sign.

Greenhouse Plastic Recycling -

The University of Maine Cooperative Extension received a grant to pilot the recycling of clear greenhouse plastic.

The program's goal is to collect at least one-third of Maine's annual waste greenhouse plastic, and partner with an end-user who can convert the collected plastic into resin feedstock used in the manufacture of new plastic products.

Collection of the waste plastic will run from May through September 2020. Participation will be free of charge and open to all growers who register for the project. Registration for participants opens March 1.

For more information contact program manager David McDaniel, 207-342-5971; agplasticrecycling@maine.edu.

Maine Vegetable and Berry Listserve -

If you're not already signed up for this, you might want to give it a try. You can ask others for advice on growing crops, business support services, sell or ask about used farm equipment, start or join in group orders for materials, or sell excess products.

FMI: <https://extension.umaine.edu/cumberland/2018/09/13/new-fruit-and-veg-listserv-for-farmer-to-farmer-communication/>

Mechanical Weed Control Project at UMaine -

If you would like a closer look at the data from the UMaine Mechanical Weed Control Project presented at the Trade Show by Dr. Peyton Ginakes, you can find it here: <http://weedmanagement.umaine.edu/>

Many thanks to ALL our business members including -

Ag Matters	http://www.agmattersllc.com/
Brookdale Farm	http://www.brookdalefruitfarm.com/
Deerbusters Deer Fence	https://www.deerbusters.com/
Harris Seeds	https://www.harriseseeds.com/
Nourse Farms	https://www.noursefarms.com/
Nutrien Ag Solutions	brian.mccleary@nutrien.com
Hammond Tractor	https://www.hammondtractor.com/
Vermont Compost	https://www.vermontcompost.com/
Globe Bag Company	https://globebag.com/