

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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*Department of Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources
Market & Production Development Division*

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Marketing Plan: FY 2000-2001**

Branding Maine Food & Agriculture

Buy Maine Food ... It's Good For Everyone!

*Department of Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources
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Programs & Services:

Planning and Advocacy - Assist agricultural associations in long-range planning and short-range problem-solving on regulatory and other issues that impact their member businesses.

Promotion of Maine Products - Promote all sectors (farm gate and value added processing) of Maine agribusiness locally, domestically, and internationally through partnerships with Maine businesses, trade associations, organizations, sister state and federal agencies.

Market Development - Develop, implement and execute programs linking Maine agribusiness directly to consumers and key buyers on a local, domestic and international basis.

New Crop and Livestock Development - Enhance Maine farm gate and value added products through identification and coordination of new crop and livestock development and capturing new market opportunities.

Public Awareness - Facilitate public relations and advocate for Maine agribusiness by developing and supporting existing programs that will improve profitability of Maine agriculture in the global marketplace.

Special Events and Promotions - Include the Maine Agricultural Trades Show, Eastern States Exposition, Open Farm Day and Ag Day at the Legislature are coordinated in this office. These events promote agriculture and serve as a tool to inform the public about the value and role of agriculture in society.

Agricultural Fairs - Serve as an information resource and provide assistance in all aspects of fair operations, administer the stipend fund and fair evaluation program, and assist the fairs in developing and expanding their agricultural programs.

International Trade - Development and coordination of emerging international market opportunities through the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service funding, services and programs offered. Be the 1st point of contact for international agriculturally related inquiries.

Agri-Tourism - Link growers and food processors with tourism promotional opportunities, such as Maine Maple Sunday, internet development, and travel media public relations.

Technology Transfer and Financing - Administer Technology Transfer development grant programs and act as agricultural liaison/referral source for business financing including federal and private funds. (7 MRSA Chp. 10 § 305 - 309)

Potato Marketing Improvement Fund - Administer and provide technical assistance regarding design and retrofitting of potato storage and packing facilities. Funding for this technical assistance and loan program to assist with the financing of approved projects is through a 1981

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bond issue. This is a revolving loan program, with the repaid principal and interest available to finance new loans. In addition, cash balances can be used to fund research on potato storage and handling. (5 MRSA Chp. 103 § 971-975)

Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund - Administer and provide technical assistance regarding loans for financing agricultural enterprises for the purpose of improving commodity and storage buildings and packing and marketing facilities; or for the construction, renovation or acquisition of land, buildings, equipment, etc. used in connection with a commercial agricultural enterprise. In addition, interest on loan repayments and unused bond funds may be used to provide grants relative to market research, technical assistance and technical transfer and promotion of Maine Food and Farms. (10 MRSA § 1023-J)

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Vision:

Maine food and agricultural products will:

- be recognized for the values the State stands for... wholesomeness, natural goodness and quality of life.
- be available to everyone in Maine at conveniently located markets and restaurants.
- establish and gain market share nationally and internationally.

Working Maine farms will be recognized as assets to our communities; providing scenic open space, good jobs, and preserving a valued and healthy way of life.

Goal:

Increase Maine's agricultural income by \$20 million per year by the year 2005.

- Each Maine citizen spending an additional \$20 per year on food products grown and/or produced in Maine would equate to a \$20 million increase in gross agricultural revenue.
- \$20 million in additional sales would provide 2,000 individual Maine farm families and food producers with an increase of \$10,000 in gross income.

I. Market/Business Information System

A. Communication

Objective: Develop/design/implement Market Information Database-driven web site.

Strategic Value: Enable producers and buyers to access information needed for successful market exchanges and business development.

Timeline: Spring, 2000

Cost: \$20,000 (Plus \$40,000 FSMIP Grant)

Partners: Producers, buyers (wholesale/retail), legislature, Ag support organizations/agencies.

Objective: Strengthen links and increase collaborative promotional activities with commodity groups currently not involved Dept. promotions (e.g. Christmas trees, nursery/greenhouse growers, beekeepers) by attending meetings and improving communication with other department liasons.

Strategic Value: Provide marketing services for underserved sectors of agriculture - through collaborative effort leverage resources for greater impact.

Timeline: Ongoing

Cost: \$2000

Partners: Commodity groups, Department of Agriculture field staff.

Objective: Strengthen links and enhance market development collaborations with regional and statewide organizations (e.g. Extension, RC&D's, Tourism).

Strategic Value: Increase effectiveness of everyone's marketing activities by leveraging resources and reducing redundancy.

Timeline: Ongoing

Cost: \$2,000

Partners: Statewide Agriculture and Business Development Organizations.

B. Infrastructure:

Objective: Ongoing promotional database development.

Strategic Value: Increase efficiency and of data maintenance, and usability/flexibility of report production for development and promotional activities.

Timeline: January, 2000

Cost: \$5,000

Partners: Division staff, producers, contractor.

C. Buyer publications:

Objective: Connect producers and buyers through the development and distribution of buyer guides.

Strategic Value: Provide information to buyers in formats they can use.

Timeline: Mail Order Guide; September, 1999
Wholesale Directory(s) revised; March, 2000
Consumer Flyers (FM, PYO, Maple) revised; March, 2000
Other; as needed

Cost: \$31,000

Partners: Producers, appropriate distribution channels.

II. Opportunity Research/Development

A. Evaluate and Conduct Feasibility Studies on:

1. Ethanol For Fuel

Objective: To establish State development program for ethanol processing and production by participation in the Agricultural Products Utilization Commission.

Strategic Value: Project will help companies wishing to start an ethanol plant, thereby establishing a new market and production opportunity for barley, corn grain, waste potatoes and possibly sugarbeets.

Timeline: Report due to legislature by January, 2000

Cost: \$450

Partners: FAME, Maine Potato Board, Cooperative Extension

2. Grain Storages for Organic Producers

Objective: To establish a grain storage in Central Maine for organic dairy producers.

Strategic Value : Project will help dairies reduce production costs and assure timely supplies of organic grains thereby maintaining markets in organic milk.

Timeline: Report on profitability by 7/99, group discussions 8/99, business startup 9/99, storages up and running by 1/2000.

Cost: \$450

Partners: University of Maine, Cooperative Extension

3. Livestock Slaughter/Processing Facilities

Objective: To establish livestock slaughter and processing facilities in strategic locations in Maine to reduce producer costs and improve marketing of finish beef and other meat products.

Strategic Value : Project will help the beef, sheep, and hog operators to keep production costs low, and to increase market share of value-added cuts to the consumer in Maine.

Timeline: Work with Division of Regulations 7/99-9/99. Investigate possible collaborators 7/99-9/99, Establish RFP 9/99, Retrofit/New Startup Technical Assistance 10/99-12/99, New Operations going by 7/1/2000.

Cost: \$600

Partners: Division of Regulations, USDA Meat Inspection Service, FDA, Beef Producers, Individual Slaughter Facilities.

4. Cranberry Development

Objective: To maximize market price for existing farms and to assist new startup operations with technical assistance.

Strategic Value : Project will help the cranberry growers maximize income from evaluation of alternative market options and help increase the amount of production in the State.

Timeline: Market Order Evaluation 7/99-11/99, Evaluation of Market Options for 2000 - Ongoing. Technical Assistance for new startups - Ongoing.

Cost: \$850

Partners: Univerisity of Maine, Cooperative Extension, Maine Cranberry Growers Association.

B. Education and Development

1. Business Planning Assistance

Objective: To improve farm business planning in order to increase markets and access to markets. Secondary objective is to assist in obtaining low cost capital for improvements to business.

Strategic Value : Project will help the farm businesses put better business plans together that will help them identify markets better and perhaps improve the marketing of their products, or find new products to market..

Timeline: FastTrac is the program that will be supported. Their timeline for marketing the program and putting on courses is ongoing. Four or Five courses will be offered from 9/99 to 7/2000. The Division will assist them in marketing and will give scholarship grants to individual farms who wish to participate.

Cost: \$11,400

Partners: Threshold to Maine RC&D, Small Business Development Centers of Maine.

2. Market Research:

Objective: Complete analysis of direct marketing channels relative to current activity, market potential, production capacity/limitations and profitability.

Strategic Value: Assist in directing efforts of new and existing farmers and food processors to market channels offering greatest expectation of profitability and success.

Timeline: March, 2000

Cost: \$5,000

Partners: Producers, consumers.

Objective: Analysis of wholesale market channels relative to current activity, market potential, production capacity/limitations and profitability.

Strategic Value: Assist in directing efforts of new and existing farmers and food processors to market channels offering greatest expectation of profitability and success.

Timeline: March, 2000

Cost: \$5,000

Partners: Producers, wholesale buyers

Objective: Research, analyze and organize available sources of market information for producers and buyers.

Strategic Value: Enable producers and buyers to access information needed for successful market exchanges and business development

Timeline: January-May, 2000

Cost: \$10,000

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Partners: USDA, extension, producers, buyers

Objective: Assiss tourism/market opportunites, industry capacity, and design of statewide development strategy.

Strategic Value: Expansion of market opportunites for Maine farms and food producers.

Timeline: Fall, 1999

Cost: \$5,000

Partners: Producers, tourism community

Objective: Complete Maine maple market analysis, including identification of opportunities and creation of strategic plan for industry development.

Strategic Value: Increase producer profits by developing a stategic plan centered around adding value to current production and marketing/promotion.

Timeline: February, 2000

Cost: \$7,000

Partners: Producers, Extension

3. Market Development:

Objective: Develop a Community Supported Agriculture resource manual.

Strategic Value: Increase direct marekt opportunities for Maine farmers and consumers.

Timeline: March, 2000

Cost: \$3,000

Partners: Farmers interested in alternative markets, consumers.

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Objective: Develop resource manual and conduct educational forums for managers and vendors of farmers markets.

Strategic Value: To stimulate successful new farmers markets and help existing markets by more successful.

Timeline: April, 2,000

Cost: \$10,000

Partners: Communities, consumers, producers, Extension, Federation of Farmers' Markets, Market Managers, 5 A Day Program, Employers.

Objective: Enhance producers' ability to draw travelers to their businesses.

Strategic Value: Increased traffic at farm stands, public markets and farmers' markets.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Cost: \$2,000

Partners: Producers, tourism industry, Tourism Commission

Objective: Develop partnerships with retail chains, distributors and producers to increase the sale of Maine agricultural products.

Strategic Value: Enhanced communication and understanding of doing business with wholesales sector.

Timeline: June, 2000

Cost: \$4,000

Partners: Buyers, producers

III. Image Development/Promotion:

A. Media Relations:

Objective: Enhance current seasonal information/press releases to include all commodity groups.

Strategic Value: Increased public awareness of seasonal availability of local products.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Cost: \$2,5000

Partners: Media, producer organizations.

B. Image Development/Promotions:

Objective: Contract with strategic marketing agency to develop image and assist in promoting Maine agricultural products.

Strategic Value: Revitalize image of Maine agriculture and stimulate awareness/interest in purchasing Maine products.

Timeline: December, 1999 through June, 2000

Cost: \$110,000

Partners: Marketing agency, producer organizations.

C. Special Promotions:

Objective: Co-sponsor public television broadcast of New England Kitchens.

Strategic Value: Gain national recognition for Maine high quality specialty foods generating increased sales for value added products.

Timeline: FY 2000

Cost: \$6,000

Partners: Maine specialty food processors, Maine and National Public Television.