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AGRICULTURE WORKS

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources



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BIENNIAL REPORT 2002

Submitted to Governor John Elias Baldacci
and The First Regular Session of the
121st Legislature, State of Maine



John Elias Baldacci
Governor

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

Commissioner's Office
28 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0028



Robert W. Spear
Commissioner

January 8, 2003



The Honorable John Elias Baldacci
Governor of Maine
One State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

On behalf of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, I am pleased to submit the 2002 Biennial Report. The statistical information it contains provides a snapshot of Maine agriculture. The report also offers readers a summary of the programs and initiatives the Department oversees to assist producers and consumers of Maine agricultural products.

The Department is the state's lead agency dealing with food, from the field to the table. Its mission is to foster opportunities for the agricultural community and to promote the conservation of our natural resources. Maine has an abundance of small farms and a solid tradition of stewardship. We must continue to strengthen our commitment to providing them the assistance needed to expand existing markets, tap new markets, and improve profitability.

We have a solid foundation. Agriculture in Maine has grown into a diverse industry. It is the largest producer of brown eggs and wild blueberries in the world. It ranks eighth in the country in production of potatoes and second in maple syrup. It ranks second in New England in milk and livestock production.

Nonetheless, challenges remain. We have to help farmers overcome the pressures of global competition, meet the demands of consumers seeking low-cost, high-quality food, and do it all in an environmentally sound manner.

Farming has been and will continue to be a cornerstone of the state's rural economy – feeding our people, preserving our land and maintaining our heritage. This report provides a look at the industry and the people and programs working to support it.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Spear
Commissioner of Agriculture

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Contents

I. Commodity Summaries 6

Dairy	6
Potatoes	6
Eggs	7
Livestock and Poultry	7
Aquaculture	7
Maine Wild Blueberries	8
Greenhouses and Nurseries	8
Maple	8
Small Fruits and Vegetables	9
Agricultural Council of Maine	
Apples	9
Cranberries	9

II. Growing New Farmers and Farms . . 10

Building Capacity and Connections	10
The Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide	
Maine FarmLink	
Ag Business Planning	10
Entrepreneurial Training	
Financing and Risk Management Strategies	
Maine Sustainable Agricultural Practices	
MESAS Videos	
Ag Business Loans	11
Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund	
The Potato Marketing Improvement Fund	
Ag Business Grants	12
Agricultural Development Grant Program	
Wolfe's Neck Farm	
Irrigation Grants	
Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program	
Agricultural Farms For The Future Grants	

III. Promoting and Marketing Maine Agriculture 14

Marketing Maine Agriculture	14
Guiding Buyers to Maine Products	
Maine Menus Month	
AG Today Goes On Line	
Engaging the Public	
Food Safety and Consumer Confidence	15
Borealis Bread	
USDA Organic Standards	16
Expanding Markets	16

Maine Senior FarmShare
Farmers' Markets
Tourism
Eastern States Exposition—The "Big E"
Agricultural Fairs and Harness Racing

IV. Stewarding Maine's Agricultural and Natural Resources 18

Minimizing Reliance Upon Pesticides	18
IPM Demonstration on Four Livestock Farms	
School Integrated Pest Management Program	
Promoting Common Sense Pest Control	
Composting	19
Maine Compost School	
Slaughterhouse Waste Management	
Large Animal Carcass Composting	
Best Management Practices	20
Right to Farm Rules	
Nutrient Management Grant Program	
Maine Bottle Bill	
Agricultural Education	21
Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Association	
Maine FFA	

V. Assuring Plant and Animal Health . . . 22

Plant Health	22
Preventing Invasive Aquatic Plants	
Controlling Invasive Plant Species	
Managing Potato Mop Top Virus	
Animal Health	23
Homeland Security	
Maine Cattle Health Assurance Program	
Emergency Management	
Animal Welfare	

VI. Highlighting Current Initiatives 24

Water Usage and Irrigation	24
Red Meat and Poultry Inspection	24
Institutional and Restaurant Buying	25
Maine Farmland Protection	25

Acknowledgements 26

Driving Directions 26

Calling to get real answers 27

Maine agriculture provides food security, jobs for families and contributes greatly to the rich cultural heritage and quality of life in our state. In 2001, Maine agriculture ranked second in New England with cash receipts of \$483 million. From on-farm employment to jobs in the processing, service and sales sectors, more than 65,000 Mainers earned a paycheck from agriculture. Agriculture's total annual economic impact on Maine is \$1.2 billion.

The diversity of Maine agriculture is our strength. Maine's farmers grow safe and plentiful food and fiber. They are the stewards of 1.25 million acres of cropland, hay fields, forests and pastures. They also help to conserve natural resources and preserve traditional recreational opportunities. Maine farms provide wildlife habitat, open spaces and scenic vistas for all Maine citizens to enjoy.

The past two years have presented opportunities and challenges for the Department of Agriculture and Maine farmers.

- Dairy farmers are getting only \$12 per hundredweight for their milk, about the same price as 25 years ago.
- Potato Mop Top Virus was discovered in Maine early last summer.
- A series of dry summers has meant poor harvests for some operations.

In late 2001, the Department was able to address these and many other problems through the support of a \$1.38 million block grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Department provided funds to commodity groups, agricultural organizations and individual producers for projects that ranged from irrigation and market development, to educational and research activities that benefit all of Maine agriculture.

This Biennial Report summarizes the status and continuing challenges of agriculture in Maine. It highlights successful Department programs and initiatives that deliver solutions for our constituents, as well as our local, state and federal partners. With numerous opportunities in the 2002 Farm Bill, new data from the 2002 *Census of Agriculture*, and strong leadership and support from the Governor and Legislature, the Department is confident that Maine agriculture will maintain its high standing both nationally and in New England, for years to come.

To learn the latest about our programs or to read the Department's most recent newsletter check the web site www.maine.gov/agriculture/.



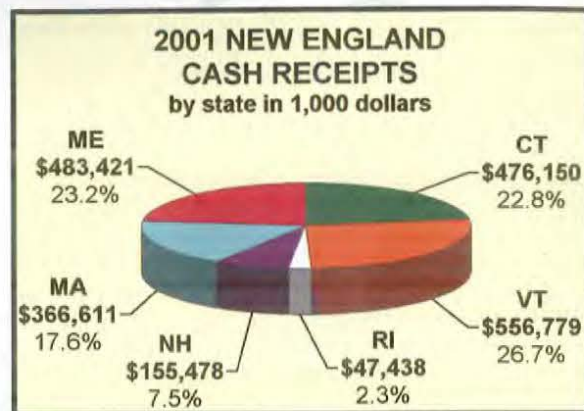
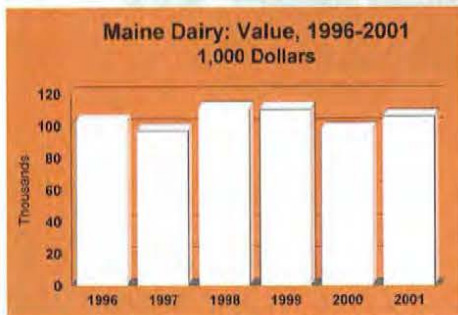
I. Commodity Summaries

Maine ranked second in the region for 2001, with cash receipts totaling \$483 million, four percent below the previous year.

Dairy

Over the past decade, the number of Maine dairy farms has decreased from 670 to just over 400. In spite of the nearly 30 percent reduction in number of farms, Maine milk sales were the top contributor to Maine's cash receipt total, with \$106 million generated in sales in 2001. Production efficiencies including improved feeding, breeding and other best management practices have allowed farmers to increase production. Between 1991 and 2000 the average production per milk cow increased from 14,786 pounds to 16,725 pounds. In the same period, Maine's total annual milk volume increased from 621 million pounds in 1991 to 669 million pounds in 2000. During much of this same period the price of production has exceeded the price dairy farmers have received for their milk. As a result of low milk prices, some farms have diversified: becoming certified organic milk producers; reducing milk herd size to focus on breeding replacements; or completely converting operations to produce hay, grains and row crops.

In October of 2001, Congress failed to reauthorize the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact that had previously helped to stabilize prices for dairy farms as transportation, feed, breeding, herd health, and equipment costs continued to increase. The Compact's over-order pricing mechanism had previously paid farmers when milk prices dropped below a certain level. In the following 12-month period between October 2001 and October 2002, the price received by Maine dairy farmers was below the Maine Milk Commission's estimated average cost of production by nearly \$4.00 per hundredweight (cwt). Northeast farmers received some relief through the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act that sent farmers retroactive payments starting October 2002. However, these payments could hardly compensate Maine's dairy farmers for the hardships they have endured.



Potatoes

In 2002, Maine potato growers harvested 64,000 acres of fall potatoes, an increase of 2,000 acres over 2001. Maine's potato production is estimated at 17 million hundredweight, three percent above the production of the previous year. Maine potato growers have proven that Maine can produce some of the best quality potatoes in North America.

However, other potato producing areas, and the world market, determine the price of our product. In 2000, as a result of over production in North America, Maine potato growers received record low prices for their potatoes. In 2001, a shortage of potatoes resulted in the highest prices for crops in recent memory. Historically, table stock production represented nearly 80 percent of Maine potato sales. In the past decade, potato production has shifted from table stock to production of potatoes for processing. Today, potatoes grown for processing represent 60 percent of the crop. The leading variety of potatoes grown in Maine is Russet Burbanks,



comprising more than 36 percent of the crop, with all Burbank varieties representing 43 percent of the crop. Seed potatoes represent about one-quarter of all potatoes grown in Maine.

Eggs

Maine is a world leader in the production of brown eggs. Over the years, the New England egg industry has done an excellent job of putting out a simple message: "Brown eggs are local eggs." New England consumers have taken this message to heart and provide a solid market for brown egg production. Brown eggs also provide an opportunity for export, being preferred over white-shelled eggs in some Asian markets. Maine has over 4.2 million laying hens. These hens produce more than 1.1 billion eggs annually.



Livestock and Poultry

Maine's beef industry has added more \$4 million in sales since 1996 as a result of industry-wide strategic planning and marketing efforts. The industry is poised to further expand as a result of a marketing development at Wolfe's Neck Farm. Wolfe's Neck Farm has entered into an agreement with the Hannaford supermarket chain to supply beef that satisfies Hannaford's strict quality standards. Wolfe's Neck is working with farms across Maine and meat processors to provide premium beef products to Hannaford stores.

Another significant development for Maine's livestock industries is the development of the Maine Red Meat and Poultry Inspection Program. The lack of access to USDA licensed slaughter facilities



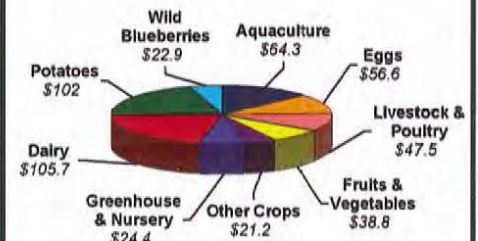
has constrained many livestock producers. The program has allowed slaughterhouses to improve their facilities and meet standards required by USDA for the sale of meat products in interstate commerce.

The farm-level cash receipts for Maine's livestock industries totaled \$274 million. When the value of Maine's dairy, chicken, egg and aquaculture industries are subtracted from that total, the marketing of other Maine livestock industries totaled about \$47.5 million in 2001.

Growers in Maine founded the Maine Alternative Poultry Association (MAPA) in 2001 to strengthen Maine's poultry industry. MAPA estimates that 300 growers are selling commercially and another 400 raise poultry for personal consumption. At present Maine lacks State or USDA certified poultry slaughter inspection facilities; however, the recently created Maine Red Meat and Poultry Inspection Program will be working with MAPA to bring poultry slaughter inspection back to Maine.



2001 MAINE FARM CASH RECEIPTS
(in millions)



Aquaculture

Maine's seafood industry employs nearly 26,000 people and brings about \$770 million to Maine's economy. In recent years, aquaculture—the science of raising certain species of fish in a somewhat controlled environment—has become an increasingly significant segment of the seafood industry. Maine has 65 aquaculture operations. These farms lease acreage in protected bays where the water is clear and nutrient rich. Maine produces between \$2 to \$3 million in the sale of mollusks and about \$64 million in the sale of salmon. Maine's stringent environmental assessment of each aquaculture lease site and its on-going water quality monitoring program ensure that the impact of aquaculture on Maine's aquatic environment is minimal.

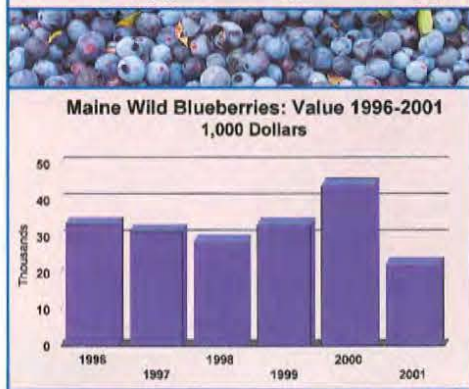
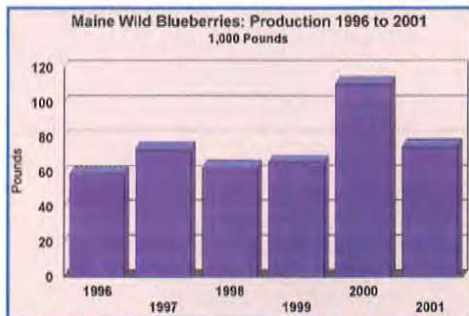


Maine Wild Blueberries



Maine continues to be the world leader in the sale of wild blueberries. Blueberries enjoy the distinction of being the fruit that is highest in Antioxidant properties which are associated with retarding cancerous cell growth. This is a valuable marketing asset that the blueberry industry has leveraged in recent years as consumers increasingly seek out those foods that promote good health. Maine had a banner crop of wild blueberries in 2000—more than 110 million pounds. The following

year promised to repeat that performance, but drought conditions during the late summer reduced the size and quality of the crop. The 2001 crop was still well above the ten-year average and the third largest crop in the past decade, and wild blueberry growers' desires for irrigation increased. Grants available through a bond approved by Maine voters in the fall of 2002 combined with increased federal funding will enable many producers to purchase and install irrigation systems that will help stabilize production volumes. Preliminary crop data for 2002 has indicated that yields also exceeded the ten-year average. Final data will be available by January 24, 2003.



Greenhouses and Nurseries

The Maine environmental horticulture industry includes businesses that provide retail and wholesale nursery and greenhouse sales, landscape services and other sales and services. The industry is valued at \$225 million, with annual sales approaching \$50 million. It is a growth industry with 800 firms, employing over 10,000 people operating 14,200 acres in active cultivation. In recent years the industry has added nearly 5,000 jobs. In addition to offering spring and fall bulbs, Maine's nurseries now grow native plants, shrubs and other non-native hardy varieties.



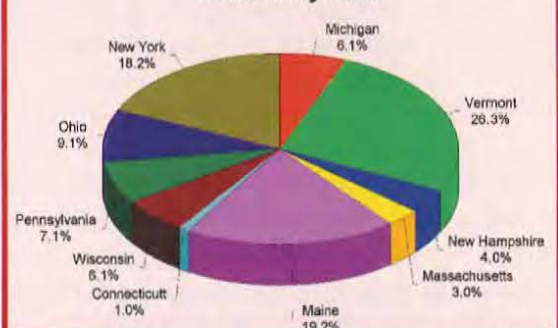
Maple

Maine's maple industry has placed a very respectable second in the U.S. national *Maple Syrup Production Report* for the past two years. Vermont was the top producer. Maine's 1,085 maple taps produced 230,000 gallons, a 15 percent increase over the previous year. In 2001, Maine producers also realized a significant increase in the average price per gallon, which was \$28.70, up \$1.01 from the 2000 price.

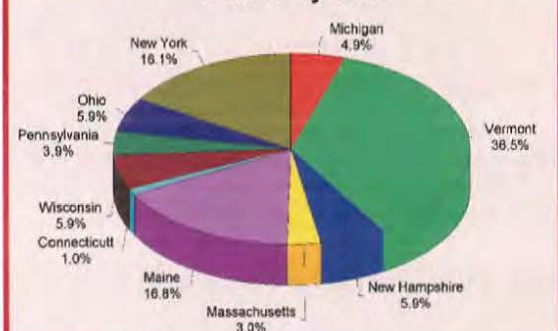


Each spring, on the last Sunday in March, Maine maple producers celebrate Maine Maple Sunday. Nearly 75 farms in 13 counties open their sugarhouses for the public to join them in their rites of spring. Most houses offer free tasting and live demonstrations of how syrup is produced—from tap to table. This event has increased these farms' visibility and popularity with their local consum-

U.S. Maple Production, 2001 Percent by State



U.S. Maple Production, 2002 Percent by State



ers who come to learn about a great Maine tradition and to enjoy pancake breakfasts, ski trails and sleigh or wagon rides. This special event has helped Maine maple producers to increase their retail sales, develop a market for value-added products and grow their bottom line.

Small Fruits and Vegetables

Maine's 600 small fruit and vegetable farms accounted for 6 percent, or \$29.6 million dollars, of the total 2001 cash receipts. The majority of Maine's fruit and vegetable operations sell approximately 50 percent of their fresh produce wholesale to local grocery store chains. Many also sell directly to consumers through farmers' markets, pick-your-own, farm stands and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) type operations. According to Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, there are 234 certified organic fruit and vegetable growers in the state. Nationally, Maine ranks fifth in broccoli production, with two operations in Aroostook County accounting for most of the acreage. Strawberries, sweet corn and pumpkins are major crops for smaller growers in Southern Maine. Greenhouse tomato production is gaining favor. Row cover production of sweet corn and other crops has also helped to extend the season for many roadside stands. In the past two years growers have hosted a Strawberry Festival in June as a kick-off event for the roadside stand and pick-your-own season in Maine. More retail grocers will seek Maine-grown fruits and vegetables as their customers become better informed about the many health, environmental and economic benefits of buying fresh, local produce. Clearly this sector is primed for expansion in the next few years.

Apples

Maine's apple industry accounted for 2 percent, or \$9.2 million dollars, of the total 2001 cash receipts, down 10 percent from previous years. Maine apple growers are in a state of consolidation due to market shifts, poor wholesale prices and increased foreign competition. The industry is now comprised of a few wholesale growers, and several growers with direct retail operations (farm stands, farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture subscribers). The Department supports the development of new, value-added processed products like jams, jellies, sauces, and dried or fresh-sliced products. A number of growers are also testing new agritourism ventures including development of cross-country ski trails, horseback riding, and festivals.

Cranberries

Maine's cranberry production for 2001 was 18,000 barrels, nearly double the production of the previous year. Although drought conditions lowered the per acre average to 58.0 barrels per acre statewide, Maine harvested 137 acres in 2000, 250.5 acres in 2001 and 219 acres in 2002. The average yield per acre in 2002 was 57.7 barrels. As Maine cranberry growers become more established and irrigation systems reduce risk of crop loss, the future of the cranberry industry grows bright. Finding niche markets for value-added cranberry products will also increase profit potential.



Agricultural Council of Maine

During the past two years, the Agricultural Council of Maine (AGCOM) has served as a valued communications forum for Maine's agricultural organizations and our state's agricultural policy makers. Virtually every statewide organization has been represented at the monthly Directors meetings. Leadership includes staff from the University of Maine's College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources; University of Maine Cooperative Extension; the Maine Department of Agriculture; USDA's Farm Services Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service; and the Maine Legislature's Committee on Agriculture. At the beginning of the 2001 legislative session, AGCOM provided all legislators with a summary and update of AGCOM's Strategic Plan. This has served as a blueprint for setting state spending priorities in the agriculture sector. AGCOM's support for inclusion of funds for nutrient management, irrigation, and potato marketing in state bond issues has helped provide for much-needed investment in these areas. AGCOM has also been an advocate of the University's Research and Development efforts. AGCOM provides Maine farm organizations with the opportunity to review and make recommendations in vital programs such as the University's Center for Maine Agriculture, the Department's marketing program, and USDA technical assistance to producers. It provides an additional and critical perspective because the Council is comprised of representatives selected by producer groups and not by public agencies.

Contact Andrew Files, AGCOM Secretary, 207-581-3108.

II. Growing New Farmers and Farms

The future of Maine agriculture depends upon the knowledge and opportunities that can be gained as people combine efforts and work together.

Building Capacity and Connections

The Department continues to foster and benefit from productive partnerships with farmers, agricultural service providers, state and federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

The Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide—Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses

Farmers trying to find labor, loans, how to price vegetables, or anything else that might concern their business, will find help in the new Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide. The Guide acts as a “switchboard” that refers the reader to the organizations, businesses, publications and web sites that can answer their questions. It

is our first attempt at providing names and addresses of the various agencies that assist farm businesses, as well as an ever-expanding list of other resources that may be helpful to a producer starting out or growing an agricultural business. The Department used a USDA—Federal/State Market Improvement Program grant to employ three college interns during the summer of 2002. The interns’ research included interviewing over 100 farmers and agricultural service providers in Maine and New England about their “favorite and best” information sources. They compiled this information to create the Guide, which is available as a CD and as a handy 404-page reference book. These have been distributed to agricultural producers and service providers statewide. The Guide is available by contacting the Department at 287-3491.

Maine FarmLink

Transitioning farms and farmland to the next generation is one of the greatest challenges facing agriculture today. Maine FarmLink—a matchmaking database service—was designed to address this challenge by connecting retiring

farmers, who want to see their land remain productive, with people who are looking to farm. As land values increase and farmland becomes worth more as residential lots or commercial developments, Maine FarmLink seeks to help stem the loss of farmland by recruiting new farmers to maintain the State’s agricultural heritage for generations to come.



Partners: *Maine FarmLink is co-sponsored by the Maine Department of Agriculture, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, the Maine Farmland Trust and the Maine Agricultural Center. Applications are available on-line at www.maine.gov/agriculture/mpdf/farmlink/ or by contacting the Maine FarmLink Coordinator, Susie O’Keeffe, PO Box 170, Unity, ME 04988, 568-4160 (messages) 568-4141 (fax).*

Ag Business Planning

Entrepreneurial Training

According to the Agricultural Council of Maine’s Strategic Plan, most farmers need better business planning skills. Up to 85 percent of banks surveyed concurred that business planning is the key reason why loans are denied. Entrepreneurship is alive and well in agriculture as more small farms are springing up to capture niche markets. In this biennium the Department started a three-part program to help new farmers and existing farmers better plan their future. The first was the establishment of a scholarship program to help farmers take business planning courses. The second was the establishment of courses in business planning utilizing the FASTTRAC or NxLevel Business Planning Curriculum. And the third was the establishment of a Teacher Training Program to train service providers in how to conduct business planning courses for farmers. In 2001, 18 farmers graduated from the program and in 2002, 12 farmers participated. Twenty



service providers were trained in conducting the NxLevel course. Graduating farmers have been enthusiastic about the program, leading to better communication, planning and financial management of their businesses. **Partners:** *Heart of Maine RC&D Area, Maine Farm Credit, Small Business Development Centers, University of Southern Maine.*

Helping Maine Farmers with Sustainable Agricultural Practices

SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) is a USDA competitive grants program that supports research and education and helps build the future economic viability of agriculture in the United States. There are grants for Research and Education, Professional Development, Farmer/Grower and Partnership. Farmer/Grower grants, among the most popular, go directly to producers to investigate or adopt new technologies or more sustainable farming practices on their farms. In the 2000-2001 grant cycle, Maine producers were successful in receiving 12 Farmer/Grower grants, ranging in size from \$763 to \$9618. The program was offered again for 2003, and 13 applications were submitted by Maine producers.

MESAS Videos

The University of Maine and the Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society (MESAS) have produced two video films as part of a larger project supported by a SARE Grant. "Conversations with Farmers: Finding Sustainable Agriculture," which aired on Maine Public Television in March 2002, contains in-depth interviews with seven Maine farm families who discuss the concepts and challenges of practicing sustainable agriculture. "Elements of Sustainable Agriculture," presents more specific aspects of sustainable agriculture from the perspective of nineteen Maine farm families. They can be purchased for \$15 each or can be borrowed for up to three weeks at no cost by contacting the Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society at 5782 Winslow Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5782, 581-3135 or andrew.files@umit.maine.edu.

Financing and Risk Management Strategies

During 2001, the Department received a grant from the USDA Risk Management Agency to create a statewide educational program on crop insurance as a risk management strategy. The Department reached nearly 1,200 producers in a total of 11 educational presentations. Over 5,700 agricultural operations received the *Crop Insurance—2002: Farming with a Safety Net* workbook by Bernard C. Morrissey Insurance, Inc. and the Department.

The Department also produced *Crop Insurance for ME*, a video designed as an introductory, supplemental tool for crop insurance discussion. The 20 minute video explains the "basics" of crop insurance and risk management through interviews with local producers. The Department also supported education on cultural practice, farm planning, record keeping and labor management. These activities served to prepare producers to effectively consider insurance as a risk management tool. Feedback indicated that the project was successful in raising awareness of crop insurance availability in Maine.

Project partners included: *University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Heart of Maine RC&D Area, Bernard C. Morrissey Insurance, Inc. and the New England office of National Agricultural Statistics Service.*

Ag Business Loans

Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund

The Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund (AMLF) provides capital improvement loans at 5 percent interest to help farmers, food processors and aquaculture operations adopt new and innovative equipment and facilities in order to improve and enhance the manufacturing, marketability and production of Maine agricultural products. In this biennium the program has loaned \$1.23 million dollars for such projects. Since its inception the AMLF program has financed 35 projects leveraging a total of \$5.4 million in investments into Maine's agricultural infrastructure. The legislature recently enacted changes to enhance the program's funding of agritourism and direct marketing enterprises. The Department also provides up to \$1,000 or 50 percent of the cost of developing a business plan to farmers who are planning to apply for AMLF loans. Two farms have participated in the program, including one for a specialty food company and one for a mill-



ing company. The value of this program is that the businesses have a stronger chance of getting a loan through the AMLF program. **Partner:** *Finance Authority of Maine.*
10 MRSA, §1023

The Potato Marketing Improvement Fund

The Potato Marketing Improvement Fund (PMIF) provides financing to potato growers and packers to construct modern storages, modernize existing storages, construct packing facilities, and purchase packing and handling equipment

as part of the industry's plan to improve the quality and marketing of Maine potatoes. PMIF consists of two programs: **Storage Retrofit Fund** and the **New Facilities Fund**.

Seventeen new potato storages, storage retrofits, or packing shed projects were completed and financed in the 2000-2002 biennium. PMIF provided \$1,854,000 in low interest permanent financing for potato storage and packing facility projects. Total industry investment in the projects was nearly \$4.2 million. Six of the seventeen projects included refrigeration systems to extend the storage of high quality processing and table potatoes into the summer months. Since its inception in 1983, PMIF has provided partial funding for 286 projects. This has added nearly 11 million hundredweight of modern storage capacity with a PMIF investment of nearly \$20 million. PMIF has recently been recapitalized by two voter-approved referenda, one in November 2001 for \$1.0 million and one in November 2002 for \$500 thousand. Additional capital provided by the bonds will enable PMIF to meet the demand for new project loans. PMIF has been a major factor encouraging the Maine potato industry to become a national leader in the adoption of new storage technologies and facilities. **Partners:** *Finance Authority of Maine, federal and state agencies and lenders who serve on the loan review committees.*

10 MRSA, §1023



Ag Business Grants

A number of grant programs are available to help farmers invest in adopting new technology, promoting products or conducting market research. Each program has its own eligibility criteria and reporting requirements.

Agricultural Development Grant Program

This program is a major competitive grant program offered once or twice a year. It funds market research, market promotion and new technology projects. These grants are given to projects that will help a large number of businesses rather than to support a few large businesses. Grants this biennium covered a broad range of projects including promoting and establishing farmers' markets; conducting a food processing survey; promoting beef, pork, grains, and fiber; conducting research on seed production and developing markets for fresh frozen blueberries and new grain crops. The program has also supported the growing trend towards agritourism and established business web sites for the Christmas tree, deer and specialty food producers. **Partners:** *Federal and state agencies and individuals who serve on the grant proposal review committees.*

7 MRSA, §306A-309



Wolfe's Neck Farm: Agricultural Development Grant Success Story

Wolfe's Neck Farm

With help from an Agricultural Development Grant from the Department and subsequent assistance in Marketing, Wolfe's Neck Farm has been able to integrate its natural beef line into over 150 Hannaford Bros. and Whole Foods retail outlets up and down the east coast. The program started nearly three years ago with a small feasibility study funded by the Department. Over the last year and a half Wolfe's Neck Farm has gone from marketing 4 to 80 steers per week. Annual gross revenue rose from \$200,000 to nearly \$5,000,000 in two years. Wolfe's Neck Farm's main objective is to get more money into the producers' hands. Nearly 50 beef producers around the state are supplying beef and receiving 5 to 20 percent above market price for cattle meeting the Wolfe's Neck Farm standards. Land that was formerly unproductive is now being used for grazing. It is expected that the majority of the production will be in northern Maine. It is estimated that nearly 20,000 acres are needed to support the program either through pasture or hay and grain production.

Irrigation Grants

The Irrigation Water Source Development Grant program provides funds for projects that invest in



new sources of water for Maine farmers who are irrigating or wish to irrigate. The funds come from two environmental bond issues in 2001 and 2002 for business infrastructure support. The program

is targeted to those farmers who are at risk of losing crops due to drought damage. The state



investment has been a sound way of supporting agriculture in Maine, keeping our farms productive, and improving

the environment by minimizing direct use of waterways. Over the past two years, the program

has supported 26 farms in the development of 13 wells, 13 ponds and one impoundment with a state investment of approximately \$500,000. This investment has protected approximately 950 acres of cropland that had sustained past losses due to drought.

Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program

This program, established under the Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund, provides grants for testing new technologies and for adapting new technology or processes. This program was developed to help spur adoption of new technology, especially for ag businesses interested in the AMLF loan program. Seven grants totaling \$47,325 have been awarded and include studies on development of a pallet machine and mechanical harvester for potatoes, mechanical harvester for grains, upgrading a poultry processing plant, a tissue culture facility, and studying new crops for ethanol production.

10 MRSA, \$1023

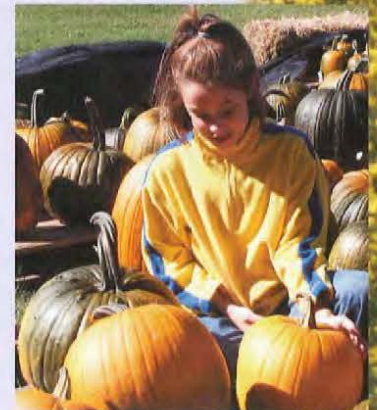


Agricultural Farms For The Future Grants

This program, established in 2001 by the Legislature, is administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises, Inc. It provides grants to farmers for developing business plans and implementing those plans. The program is designed for farmers who are under development pressure and are willing to enter into a conservation easement with the State for up to 10 years in exchange for the grants. In 2001 there were 15 business planning grants awarded. The second round of grants (in 2002) resulted in 21 farms receiving assistance.

Partners: *Coastal Enterprises, Inc., federal and state agencies and individuals who serve on the program advisory committees.*

7 MRSA, \$317



III. Promoting and Marketing Maine Agriculture

Strong leadership and support from the Governor and the 119th Legislature initiated funding for a new promotional campaign for Maine food and farm products.

Marketing Maine Agriculture

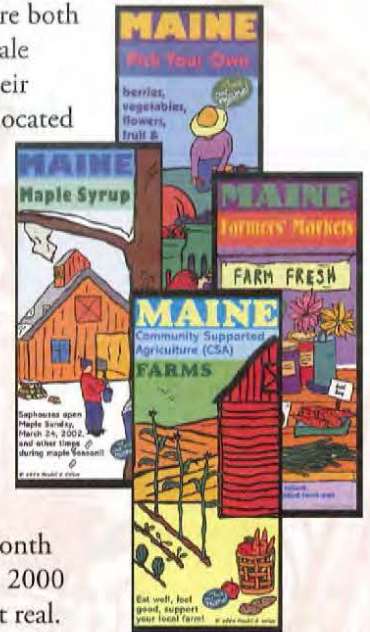
The Department is continuing to work with a professional advertising agency to expand the “get real. get maine!” branding program that began in 1999. The program aims to increase public awareness of Maine products and improve Maine producers’ profitability. Currently, hundreds of producers, retailers and restaurants, both in-state and out-of-state, are using the “get real. get maine!” logo to identify their Maine food and farm products.

Market research conducted in 2002 showed that 89 percent of the 300 consumers surveyed believed that buying locally grown food and fiber helps the State’s economy. In the same survey, 73 percent of the respondents said that they make an effort to buy locally grown products, while 45 percent said that they were aware of the get real, get maine! campaign. The Department and its partners will continue this marketing and promotion campaign through press releases, public-service announcements, public relations events and Internet tools to reach a larger and more diverse audience.

able to ship their products directly to the customer. In addition to these printed publications, the www.getrealmaine.com web site has several search pages where both retail and wholesale producers and their products can be located using several different search criteria. There is a direct link to the producers’ e-mail address and web site when it is available.

Maine Menus Month

Maine Menus Month was developed in 2000 as part of the “get real. get maine!” branding campaign. Increasing the use and availability of Maine foods in local restaurants is one way to help many people. Restaurants boost sales, residents and visitors eat delicious local foods, and farm and fishing industries access new markets. In October of 2002, the third year of the program, over 125 Maine restaurants’ menus featured items prepared from locally grown, raised or harvested ingredients. Diners could rate their favorite menu item and enter a drawing for prizes including a weekend getaway in Maine and State Park and fair passes. When all the votes were tallied, the Department found that 25 percent of the voters were visitors and tourists. The event continues to be a success. Restaurants are recognizing the value of buying fresh, quality food from local farms and restaurant patrons certainly enjoy tasting the difference!



Guiding Buyers to Maine Products

The Department maintains an extensive database of Maine producers including products, target markets, distribution areas and specific promotional activities. This information has enabled the Department to publish consumer guides to farm stands, farmers’ markets, pick-your-own farms, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms and other special promotions or events. The *Wholesale Buyers’ Guide to Maine Food* has helped to connect many growers and specialty food producers to buyers in- and out-of-state. The retail mail order guide, *Get Real Maine by Mail*, contains listings of producers who are



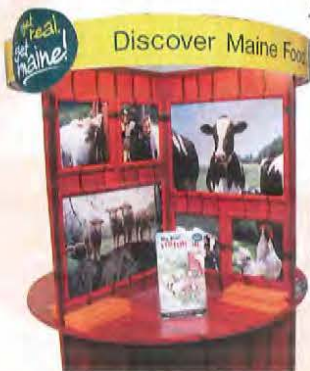
AG Today Goes On Line

For several years the Department's bi-weekly newsletter has informed constituents about issues that are important to agriculture. Starting in January 2003, the newsletter is on line at www.maine.gov/agriculture/newsletter/. This will enable the Department to reach a broader audience and expand the content of the newsletter to highlight success stories that demonstrate the many ways that agriculture contributes to Maine's economy and culture.



Engaging the Public

As part of its strategic marketing plan, the Department works closely with the media to feature full-length stories about real Maine farms and food processors. By telling these stories, we are hoping to raise consumers' appreciation of Maine agriculture and thus inspire them to purchase more Maine products. In 2002, with Oakhurst Dairy, the Department co-sponsored a televised cooking show, *The Maine Dish*, which featured Maine-grown or processed ingredients and specialty food products. Last summer the Department's interactive information kiosks at the Kittery Information Center and the Maine Mall engaged children and adults alike. Other annual events like the Great Maine Apple Day, Maine Maple Sunday and Open Farm Day also benefit from the Department's outreach to newspaper, radio, Internet and television media.



Food Safety and Consumer Confidence

The Department's Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations is responsible for licensing and inspecting food establishments such as retail food stores, bakeries, food processors and beverage plants. The licensing and inspection activities ensure that food is processed, prepared, packaged, stored, and offered for sale in a sanitary and safe

manner. Food establishment operators are held to strict public health standards that are found in the *Maine Food Code* and the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety system, thus reducing risk of food borne disease.

To protect consumers and businesses from fraud or unfair trade practices in the marketplace, the Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations evaluates weighing and measuring devices and investigates cases of fraud. The Division provides training, supervision and calibration services to municipalities that have local Weights and Measures Sealers. The Division oversees retail fuel meter inspections, home heating oil meter inspections, package inspections, scanner inspections, taxi inspections, calibrations of farm milk tanks and licensing of wood scalers.

ANNUAL EVENTS TO PROMOTE MAINE AGRICULTURE

Maine Agricultural Trades Show	January
Ag Day at the Maine Legislature	March
Open Farm Day	July
Eastern States Exposition	September

The Department also co-sponsors 24 agricultural fairs and nearly 20 other annual agricultural events.

Borealis Bread

Jim Amaral, owner of Borealis Bread, continues to set a high standard for business commitment to producing quality, local food made from Maine grown ingredients. Over the past few years, Jim has contracted with Aroostook farmers to grow organic wheat for his growing bakery business and now is in the process of establishing a mill in the County for processing the grain into flour.

Jim has been able to grow his bread business with statewide distribution at his own and other retail stores, at farmers' markets and through the Hannaford stores, including having an in-store Borealis bakery in Hannaford's Portland Forest Avenue store location. With an Ag Development Grant from the Department, Jim was able to promote not only his products, but also the Aroostook growers with whom he contracts to produce wheat for his bread. His farmer "collector cards" and audio visual display in the middle of the Hannaford store continue to do a great job of educating Maine consumers about where their food comes from and about agriculture in Maine.



The Department also manages branding standards and registration and testing of seed, feed, and fertilizer in the State of Maine. All feed and fertilizer products sold within the State must be registered with the Department.



USDA Organic Standards

On October 21, 2002, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Ann M. Veneman, announced the implementation of the USDA's National Organic Program which identified standards for organic agricultural production. Along with these standards, the USDA adopted strict labeling rules to help consumers know the exact organic content of the food they buy. Consumers now can identify organically produced food via package labels and signs in the supermarket. Maine has participated in a cooperative agreement with USDA to share the cost of organic certification for producers. Through the Department's Division of Plant Industry, cost-share funds are provided to eligible organic crop and livestock producers to assist them in transitioning to the new National Organic Program. In 2001-2002, the Division provided approximately \$30,000 to organic producers in Maine. The Division recently submitted a cooperative agreement to USDA to continue the cost-share program through 2003. The Department works closely with the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), a USDA accredited organic certification agency, to certify each organic operation and subsequently distribute these funds.



Expanding Markets

Maine Senior FarmShare

In 2001, the Department, in partnership with other state agencies and organizations, developed and implemented the Maine Senior FarmShare program. Funded by the USDA and administered by the Department, this popular program provides locally grown produce to low-income seniors throughout the state.



In 2002, the second year of this innovative and successful program, over 7,000 seniors received \$100 of fresh, local produce directly from a farm. Approximately 15,000 more received produce through a food pantry, housing or meal site. A total of 184 Maine farms benefited from almost one million dollars in increased sales. This program has been a great opportunity for Maine farmers to expand their markets, and for low-income seniors to get fresh, nutritious, locally grown produce. Future funding of this valuable program has been authorized by the U.S. Congress through the 2002 Farm Bill. States must come up with their own administrative funds to run their programs.



Caldwell Farms, a Portland Mall Farmers' Market vendor, with their first-of-its-kind, portable, generator-cooled, glass-fronted display unit from which they sell their organic farm-raised beef and dairy products.

Farmers' Markets

Maine has 54 farmers' markets located throughout the state. Some farmers' market associations have worked to improve quality while others have expanded to additional new sites. The Department's Agricultural Development Grants have assisted several farmers' markets with television, Internet and print-media advertising that posts the hours and locations of each farmers' market. Another Department grant funded a study of "Best Farmers' Markets Practices." In 2003, the Department and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension will co-host a conference for farmers' market vendors to discuss the results of this study and plan for future market support and development.

Tourism

Agriculture plays an increasing role in tourism. Maine's farms provide fresh, high quality ingredients for local restaurants and satisfy summer folk who want to "buy and eat local." Farms

also provide scenic vistas and outdoor activities like strawberry and apple picking, hayrides and cross-country skiing. The Department is a new member of the inter-agency Cultural Tourism Partnership and will participate in the Governor's 2003 Conference on "Sustainable Tourism." Conference attendees will consider how to build more connections between the tourism and Maine's diverse environment, including its agricultural industries. Recent Department activities to engage Maine's tourists include locating a new display in the Kittery Visitor Information Center and sponsoring the 2002 Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau Destination Day which targeted large conference planners and tour group operators. The event and reception featured Maine foods cooked by Maine chefs, a trade-show booth with Maine food source guides, and a workshop highlighting how and where planners might enhance their next event with a Maine food and farm connection.

Eastern States Exposition—"The Big E"

Thanks to an appropriation from the 119th Legislature and contributions from a number of businesses and individuals, a \$1.6 million renovation project on the Maine Building at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts was completed in 2001. The entire interior space is now more spacious and inviting with a larger exhibit area, and



extended roof peak with skylights. As a finishing touch, colorful ceiling mobiles were paid for through the Maine Arts Commission's Percent for Art Grant Program. Nearly 900,000 people visit the Maine Building each September to learn about and enjoy Maine-grown and Maine-made products.

Agricultural Fairs and Harness Racing

Maine's 24 licensed agricultural fairs host nearly one million paying fairgoers annually. Each summer the State of Maine fair season begins the first week of July and runs through the end of the first week of October. Each fair's agricultural exhibits, animal displays, crafts and commercial exhibits celebrate Maine's rural way of life and summertime traditions. Fairs also include a midway of entertainment and rides. In 2002 the Department's 20-foot, all-weather trailer featuring video, pictorial and informational material about Maine Agriculture was exhibited at 15 fairs and trade shows throughout the State.

Eight agricultural fairs host pari-mutuel racing with a ninth fair track planned in the upcoming season. In total, Maine Harness Racing will include nine fair tracks, two commercial tracks located in Bangor and Scarborough, and five off-track betting facilities. The Department oversees all licenses associated with the racing animals, as well as their owners, drivers and trainers. The Maine Harness Racing Commission includes five Governor appointees who oversee the track rules, regulations and State of Maine racing handle. Proceeds from the pari-mutuel wagers are distributed to agricultural fairs, to supplement purses and to assist in the development of the Maine Standardbred Breeders Program. Visit www.getrealmaine.com/fairs/ for a current fair season schedule.



Established in 1818, Maine's Skowhegan State Fair is the oldest continuous agricultural fair in the Nation.



IV. Stewarding Maine's Agricultural and Natural Resources

Maine Agriculture Reduces, Reuses and Recycles

Minimizing Reliance Upon Pesticides

IPM Demonstration on Four Livestock Farms

The Department's IPM program actively engages in the development of effective alternatives for managing pests both on and off the farm. In 2001, the Department and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension worked with four

dairy farms to test a method for biologically controlling nuisance flies. The experiment involved the release of tiny wasps that attack and kill houseflies and stable flies. All farms experienced a high level of control, indicating that this low-risk method is an effective and affordable addition to a well-rounded dairy pest management program.



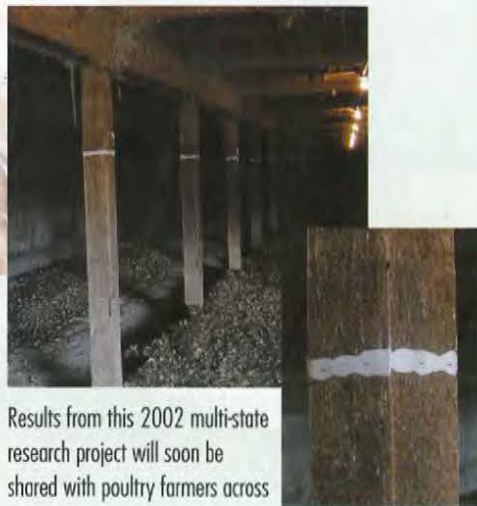
Beneficial insects (wasps) were released into calf hutches as part of a fly management demonstration program.



Department Intern, Jason Brown, monitors for beneficial insects (wasps) used in the nuisance-fly management demonstration.



A new low-risk device for managing insect pests is installed on a Maine egg farm. A plastic sheet beetle barrier is attached with staples and latex caulk to walls and posts under a poultry barn.



Results from this 2002 multi-state research project will soon be shared with poultry farmers across the northeast, and at the web site: www.maine.gov/agriculture/oanrr/IPM.htm.

School Integrated Pest Management Program

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a science-based approach to managing pests that was introduced over 30 years ago to help farmers produce and protect crops while minimizing reliance on pesticides. It is now widely recognized that IPM concepts and practices are the best approach for managing pests wherever they occur, whether it is on farms, in gardens, greenhouses, forests, parks, or even buildings. The Department provides leadership and expertise, working in partnership with other organizations, to promote the use of IPM as the most effective approach for managing pests on farms, in schools and within our communities.

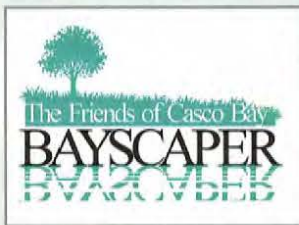
The Department established the **Maine School IPM Program** in 2000. This program offers training, outreach and other resources to Maine's schools to promote healthy learning environments for our children. Through a tri-agency partnership with University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Maine Board of Pesticides Control, and in cooperation with other northeastern states, this program has developed educational resources and training programs for school staff, administrators and other professionals. During 2001-2002 the School IPM Program conducted eight workshops for over 300 participants serving schools across the state.

In 2002, the EPA awarded a \$40,000 grant to the Department to serve as the lead agency for the development and implementation of a pilot school IPM demonstration program for Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire. With this grant, IPM "tool-kits" will also be developed and distributed to schools in all three states. Further information can be obtained at the web site: www.thinkfirstspraylast.org/schoolipm/.



Promoting Common Sense Pest Control... One Watershed at a Time

The Department, through the Board of Pesticides Control, has taken a marketing approach to providing incentives and training for reducing pesticide applications by Maine's largest and least regulated pesticide user group: the homeowner. Addressing the explosive growth in lawn care pesticide use, BayScaping is a program that promotes sound horticulture and integrated pest management (IPM) with a focus on the quality of Casco Bay, the watershed endpoint of Maine's most populated region. Individuals demonstrating knowledge of low impact lawn



care practices are recognized as BayScapers, environmental stewards whose green yards keep Casco Bay blue. BayScaping also measures importance of such outreach by

monitoring water quality of fresh water swales feeding directly into Casco Bay. Collaboration is core to BayScaping's growth. Thanks to the Friends of Casco Bay, Southern Maine Technical College, Skillins Nurseries, University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Board has created an IPM model now under consideration by stewardship organizations in Penobscot Bay and Scarborough Marsh regions.

Composting

Maine Compost School

The Department is an active partner in offering the internationally recognized Maine Compost School. The school offers week long classes four times each year, focusing on the science and art



Compost school classroom.

of large scale composting. (Large scale is defined as larger than backyard composting where equipment, such as a front loader would be required.) A mix of classroom teaching, hands on activities and visits to active large scale compost facilities provides students with a varied and exciting educational experience. The sites visited by the school includes an automated indoor sludge compost facility in Lewiston/Auburn, a farm composter in Litchfield handling slaughterhouse by-products, a commercial manure composting and bagging operation in New Sharon and forced aeration system composters in Wilton and Lisbon Falls.

Follow-up surveys of graduates have shown that the school has had significant impacts on the quality of composting in Maine, the rest of the United States and even in a number of other countries. The Maine Compost School has also offered programs outside the state. In 2000, the school was held in Melbourne, Australia, and graduated a class of 33 students. In 2001, the school was held in the Carolinas, with 30 graduates. As of January, 2003, the school has trained approximately 430 composters. More information about the school can be found on its web site: www.composting.org.

Slaughterhouse Waste Management

In the winter of 2001, the Maine slaughterhouse industry saw a sudden dramatic increase in the cost of rendering services for disposing of their waste products. In some cases, Maine facilities experienced a ten fold increase in the cost of disposal. This rapid increase threatened the viability of many operations, especially the small custom shops. The industry approached the Department



Turning a compost pile.



Compost pile management.

to help with solutions to this crisis. In response, the Department explored a number of alternative means to manage this material. Composting was a positive solution that would not only manage the waste material, but would produce a useful product from it. The Department has undertaken a number of composting trials using slaughterhouse wastes and has shown that composting is a technically viable method to managing the waste. Staff are now in the process of setting up pilot sites in several areas of the state to test this concept on a commercial scale.

Large Animal Carcass Composting

The outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Great Britain in the winter of 2001 raised concerns within the agricultural community about how



Large animal carcass composting.

such an outbreak would be managed if it were to occur in Maine, especially with respect to carcass disposal. At the request of the Department, the Maine Compost Team undertook composting trials to determine if composting could be used to dispose of the carcasses and also contain and eliminate the virus that causes the disease. Based on the results of the trials,

state officials and the state and federal veterinarians involved with the process determined that composting would be the first choice of disposal methods if a foot and mouth disease outbreak should occur in Maine. Many other states are now considering this process as a carcass management approach for disease outbreaks.

Best Management Practices

Right to Farm Rules

Maine's "Right to Farm Law" (17 MRSA §2805) provides protection from nuisance suits to farms that are operating according to "Best Management Practices" (BMPs). It mandates that the Commissioner investigate agricultural complaints and prescribe site specific BMPs when necessary to correct a problem. The law also provides for penalties for farms that refuse to adopt or implement site specific BMPs. The Department has two Agricultural Compliance Officers who investigate and develop appropriate BMPs for each farm situation.

The Department is currently drafting concepts for rules that would reflect the current process used in investigating and solving problems and establishing procedures for handling appeals and enforcement actions. At the same time, the Department is producing a resource book that will contain many of the currently accepted BMPs for minimizing



nuisances and protecting the environment. This resource book will be used as a guide for the Agricultural Compliance Officers who are working with farmers to select and develop site specific BMPs for their farms.

Nutrient Management Grant Program

The development and implementation of the Nutrient Management Grant Program was one of the biggest accomplishments of the Nutrient Management Program in 2000-2001. To comply with the Winter Manure Spreading Ban provision of the Law, producers throughout the State needed to either construct a certified manure storage facility or identify suitable stacking sites where manure could be stored until it could be spread. These requirements placed a significant financial burden on some Maine farmers. The Department developed a Nutrient Management Grant Program intended to help farm operations comply with the Nutrient Management Law and prevent water contamination through adequate storage of farm nutrients.

The 119th Legislature appropriated a total of \$2.5 million to facilitate the construction of manure storage and handling facilities on Maine's farms. The Department received a total of 145 proposed projects, with a total cost of \$15.4 million. The requested amount of grant funds was approximately \$7.3 million. The average amount awarded per project was \$58,018 with grants ranging from \$10,195 to \$100,000. The amount available could only cover a third of the total requested amount for this round of funding. Twenty-six of the funded projects were on smaller farms, with a significant proportion going to medium size farms (12 projects) and the rest to large operations (2 projects).

Maine Bottle Bill

For the last two years the Department has been attending and participating in a Bottle Study Committee. This Study Committee was directed by the Legislature to look at ways to improve the efficiency of Maine's Bottle Bill, particularly with respect to the management of redeemed containers at redemption centers.

In response to the needs that were identified by the committee, the Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations will be adopting rules that improve enforcement of the Maine Bottle Bill and provide for the needs of its customers. The Department will be licensing all redemption centers, initiators of deposits and contracted pickup agents. In addition, the Department will be registering labels of all beverage containers sold in Maine that fall under the jurisdiction of the Maine Bottle Bill and will develop a web based interactive database with this registration information. This interactive database will give redemption centers, retailers and other interested parties up-to-date information including the registration status, pickup methods, and container materials of beverage containers that can be redeemed in Maine.

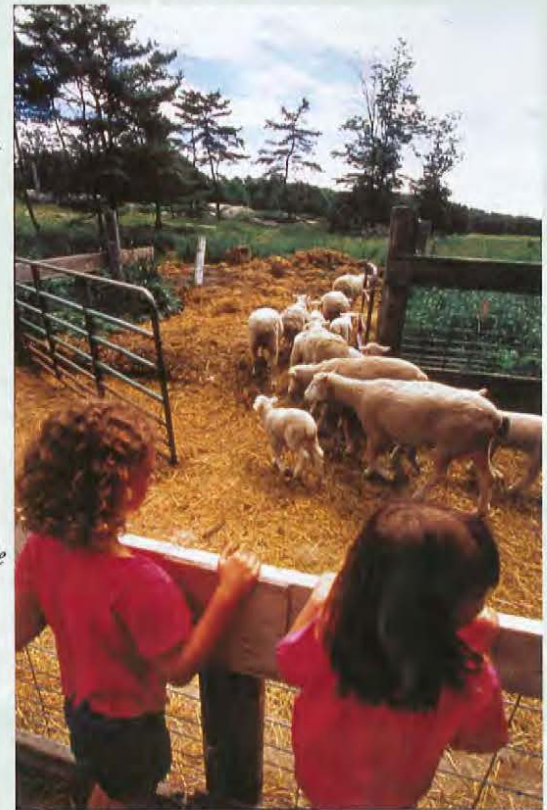
Agricultural Education

AGCOM members who participated in the Department's strategic planning process identified agricultural education—incorporating agricultural and natural resource concepts into classroom learning—as a high priority for the Department. Agricultural education can be a gateway for young people wishing to pursue a career in agriculture. It is also a means to create an awareness and appreciation of agriculture among the general public. Today's students are tomorrow's voters. It is the goal of agricultural education to make students aware of the role of agriculture in production of our food, its contribution to our economy, the stewardship of our natural resources and maintenance of the character of our rural communities.

The Department has been a primary force in the activities of **Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Association** (MAITCA) and the **Maine FFA**. The Department is also a supporter of the **Maine Association of Conservation District's** (MACD) **Natural Resource Institute's** (NRI) and the **Natural Resource Conservation Services'** (NRCS) **Envirothon Program**.

Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Association

The Association maintains an office in the Department's headquarters in Augusta. MAITCA has adopted the national *Project Food, Land & People* curriculum. In the past year, MAITCA has expanded the original 30-lesson curricula to 45 lesson plans. In addition, MAITCA has worked with the **Maine Wild Blueberry Commission** to develop and field-test an additional curriculum on wild blueberries. MAITCA has trained a cadre of over 20 trainers and provided training and curricula to over 500 classroom teachers and other educators. MAITCA maintains a resource library for teachers at the **Bangor Public Library**. For the past two years, MAITCA has trained and provided the *Project Food, Land & People* material to participants in the **Natural Resources Institute** and, this year, will provide training to the coaches of **Envirothon** teams across Maine.



Maine FFA

The state affiliate of the national FFA organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The Department provides grant funds to each FFA Chapter to be used to provide leadership training. Department staff participates in officer training and serves as Advisor. A few years ago, Maine FFA had only five remaining chapters in Maine schools—all north of Mars Hill, Maine. Today, there are 15 active FFA Chapters and a dynamic increase in membership—there is even a Collegiate Chapter at the University of Maine in Orono. Many of the recent high school and university graduates have now assumed leadership roles on farms and in agricultural businesses across Maine.

V. Assuring Plant and Animal Health

Adopting new practices to improve plant and animal health.

Plant Health

Preventing Invasive Aquatic Plants

The Department plays a role in the state's effort to prevent invasive aquatic plants from becoming established. Through the animal welfare and nursery inspection programs, pet stores and

garden centers are being monitored for the 11 illegal invasive aquatic plants. These plants are sold for aquariums and water gardens. The Department is educating businesses within the

state and suppliers outside the state about plants that cannot be sold in Maine. The Department is also working closely with the Department of Environmental Protection to continue looking at options for controlling these invasive species.

Controlling Invasive Plant Species

Giant hogweed was officially reported in Maine. This plant is very tall and attractive, but a public health hazard, causing a skin reaction from contact with the sap. Because of this characteristic it is listed as a federal noxious weed. The Department obtained funding from the USDA to conduct a survey to determine giant hogweed distribution throughout the state and educate the public on identifying and controlling this plant.

Managing Potato Mop Top Virus

Potato Mop Top Virus (PMTV) is a disease of limited distribution throughout the world. It has been reported in a number of potato-growing regions around the world, but until 2002, there had only been unconfirmed reports of the disease in the US and Canada. Consequently, most countries, including the US and Canada,

had already instituted quarantines to prevent the introduction of PMTV. Potato mop top virus was identified on Aroostook County seed farms in the summer of 2002. At that time, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) considered PMTV as a disease of quarantine importance. The virus has no implications for human health and does not appear to significantly reduce the yield or quality of potatoes. The University of Maine's Agricultural Experiment Station notified the Department that PMTV was confirmed in a research plot on the Experiment Station's Aroostook Farm, which is located in Presque Isle. Because of the quarantine status of PMTV in the US, the Department took immediate steps to place Aroostook Farm under quarantine.

CFIA notified USDA in mid-August, 2002 that it had found PMTV through laboratory testing of potatoes from 9 states in the U.S., including Maine. As a result of the apparent widespread nature of the pathogen in North America, and as a result of the minor economic impact of the pathogen on potato production, USDA and CFIA announced on December 23, 2002 that they would remove PMTV from the quarantine list and treat it as a regulated, non-quarantine pest managed through seed certification. This is good news for Maine's potato industry, which was facing severe restrictions on the shipment of seed potatoes to its traditional markets, as well as restrictions on the movement of tablestock and processing potatoes.

Working together with the North American potato industry, APHIS and CFIA will identify needed research related to these viral diseases and work collaboratively on various research initiatives to improve certification and management programs.



Hydrilla verticillata



Milfoil up close



Animal Health

Homeland Security

The Department serves on the Governor's Homeland Security Task Force and the Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Response Team. Due to the economic and environmental value of Maine's plant and animal industries, and the fact that these industries have been listed as "highly vulnerable" to acts of bioterrorism, the Department is working with the USDA to develop strategies to respond to deliberate introductions or inoculations of plant pests and plant and animal diseases.

Maine Cattle Health Assurance Program

The Maine Dairy Quality Management Steering Committee, a group of producers, veterinarians, University of Maine Cooperative Extension staff and other industry representatives, continues to expand the Voluntary Cattle Health Assurance Program in Maine. This program emphasizes farm profitability, animal health and welfare, and environmental stewardship, all of which are crucial to enhancing the future competitiveness of Maine's dairy industry.



Emergency Management

In 2001, Great Britain's livestock industries were devastated by an outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), a severe, highly-communicable viral disease that can infect cattle, swine, sheep and other cloven-hoofed animals (deer and moose). The Department responded to this disaster in several ways. The Department immediately implemented an "on-farm" biosecurity protocol for employees visiting farms, livestock events and agricultural fairs. Maine's large animal private practitioners received training to identify FMD and certain other foreign diseases. Two of Maine's State Veterinarians were part of an elite team of US large-animal veterinarians dispatched

to Great Britain to: 1) Assist farmers and agricultural agencies; 2) Learn what steps could be taken to prevent such an outbreak in the United States; and 3) Gain experience containing and managing such an outbreak should one ever occur in Maine or anywhere else in the United States.

The knowledge our State Veterinarians obtained has been critical to the development of Maine's Emergency Response Plan. In October 2002, the Department and the Maine Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Response Team participated in a regional "table top" exercise to manage a simulated emergency. Industry representatives who participated learned how the plan would impact and assist their respective industries. The Department learned how to coordinate the overall plan and manage the incident command center. It also identified what educational and informational materials need to be distributed to farms and communities. The Department is creating a web-based reporting system and protocol to allow Maine's large-animal veterinarians to coordinate with the Department in real-time monitoring of certain animal diseases.



Emergency Response Team tracking FMD in Great Britain in 2001.



Maine State Veterinarian, Don Hoenig, at FMD car washing and decontamination checkpoint in Great Britain, 2001.

Animal Welfare

The Department's Animal Welfare Program is guided and staffed by the Office of Agricultural, Natural and Rural Resources. The Program responds to reports of animal cruelty. The Program manages a high incidence of animal abuse reports. Recent challenges for the Program include seeking additional funding, hiring additional staff, re-writing rules and producing an informational handbook for citizens and animal owners. The Department is assisted in these efforts by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, which is charged by the Governor to advise the Commissioner on matters relating to animal welfare.



VI. Highlighting Recent Initiatives

Water Usage and Irrigation

The Department has a long history of developing policies and programs to address the number-one production risk facing Maine farmers today – lack of water. In the past 10 years, over 6 million dollars of federal disaster relief funds have been distributed to farmers for losses due to drought. In 1999, the Irrigation Development Program was established after Governor King visited drought-stricken, lowbush blueberry fields to inspect the millions of dollars of devastation

caused by drought. As a result, the Department put together a plan for action that included providing technical assistance, grants, and additional research to help Maine farmers lower their risks. A grant from the USDA in 2001 led to the establishment of an Irrigation Advisory Committee, which recommended calling for funds to help farmers establish new water sources. Two bond issues were subsequently passed

creating a \$1.25 million dollar fund that will provide cost-sharing for farmers to construct farm ponds and wells. The Committee is now focused on streamlining both the federal and state mitigation requirements for wetland alteration. It is also conducting a full review of state policy to make certain that—when future cases of drought or competition for water usage occur—water for agriculture will remain a “high priority use.” Currently, only 13 percent of Maine farmers (700) irrigate their fields (22,000 acres). The Department anticipates that the number will double to 1,400 farms (44,000 acres) in the next five years. In preparation for this change, the Department and several other state and local agencies are doing the following:

- 1) Conducting a statewide Agricultural Water Use and Needs Survey;
- 2) Creating a computer program that will assist farmers with formulating water management plans; and

- 3) Publishing a Best Management Practices manual that enable farmers to improve their use and management of water to reduce crop risk to increase the sustainability of their farms and farmland in Maine.

Red Meat and Poultry Inspection

Due to the Department’s new, USDA approved, **Red Meat and Poultry Inspection Program**, many of Maine’s livestock producers now have greater access to animal slaughter and processing facilities.

In 2000, the Department’s statewide study determined a widespread need for more inspected and approved slaughter facilities. Therefore the Department allocated and distributed a \$100,000 grant among six key plants in differing geographic locations.

The grant enabled each facility to upgrade operations, meet sanitary guidelines and open for State inspection. In August 2001, the Department hired a Food Inspection Supervisor to create a comprehensive state program proposal which was submitted to the USDA for final approval. On November 1, 2002, Maine’s program was published in the Federal Register, making Maine the second state in New England to have a Red Meat and Poultry Inspection Program.

Maine’s Program uses inspection and operation standards that are equivalent to USDA’s standards and is partially (50 percent) funded with Federal funds.



Irrigating corn at Harris Farm in Buxton.



Institutional and Restaurant Buying Programs

Getting local foods to larger, local markets is a challenge for Maine farmers. Usually an institutional or wholesale buyer finds it easier to deal with one, large-volume supplier rather than



many small-volume producers. Conversely, many local producers often struggle with finding an efficient way to distribute the volume and variety they collectively

produce. The Department salutes two regional pilot programs that are bridging the gap between producers and institutional buyers.

Farm Fresh Connection, a new program of the Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society, is currently linking the food service programs of Bates (Lewiston) and Bowdoin (Brunswick) colleges with farmers in the area. The project plans to expand into the Portland area, to reach several post-secondary educational institutions and two hospitals. "Local food translates into fresh, which translates into quality," says Jon Wiley at Bowdoin College. "We really believe in what we're doing for the local economy and for the environment." With start-up support from Common Good (an affiliate program of the Maine Community Foundation), the distribution venture is expected to be self-supporting at the end of three years. *For more information, contact: Farm Fresh Connection, Martha Putnam, Operations Director, PO Box 11228, Portland, Maine 04104, 207-939-4748, putnammartha@yahoo.com*

Buy Local, Eat Fresh Delivery Service, created with support from the Hancock County Planning Commission, has just completed its second year of operation. It

provides coordination and distribution services to connect a dozen local farms with over 50 restaurants and retail stores in the greater Coastal Hancock County



area. This project is an offshoot of the Hancock County Fresh, Locally Grown network of restaurants, farms and food producers founded in 1995. This group

strengthens a market "pull," for local foods by distributing an annual directory of 40 restaurants that have pledged to purchase ingredients from local producers. The project is expected to be self-supporting within five years. *For more information, contact: The Locally Grown Foods Project at the Hancock County Planning Commission, 395 State Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605, locallygrown@hpcme.org.*

Maine Farmland Protection

Maine's Farmland Protection Program is gaining vital support from farmers, land trusts, state planners and our funding sources - the Land for Maine's Future Program and the USDA Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program. In 2001, the Department and 50 stakeholders initiated a 2-year strategic planning effort to determine how best to protect Maine's farmland. The effort, funded by a grant through the Maine State Planning Office, enabled



the Department to work with American Farmland Trust, a national organization dedicated to policy development for farmland protection. Maine's five-year plan will commence this spring as state agencies and organizations further define their roles and set goals to work together to protect Maine's farmers, farms and farmland. With \$1.2 million per year from the USDA program

now matching \$1.2 million per year from the Land for Maine's Future Program, Maine will be able to protect nearly 1,000 acres per year through the purchase of development rights. However, success also depends upon implementing many other economic, land use planning and citizen action tools. The Department, with assistance from Maine Farmland Trust and the Farms for the Future Program, is increasing outreach to (a)

farmers to help them with estate and business planning, (b) Conservation Commissions to help them initiate farmland protection efforts in their communities, and (c) towns to help them better utilize smart growth practices to "keep Maine agriculture growing," in each region.





Acknowledgements

The 2002 Biennial Report is a production of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources. We gratefully appreciate the assistance of many agencies, organizations and individuals who contributed information and photographs for this report. The Department would like to thank the staff of this Department, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Maine Department of Marine Resources, the Agricultural Council of Maine, Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society, Maine FarmLink, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Wolfe's Neck Farm, Borealis Breads, Farm Fresh Connections and the Hancock County Planning Commission, Maine Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA New England Agricultural Statistics Service, and the Maine Office of Tourism.

Driving Directions

The Department of Agriculture offices are located on the top two floors of the Deering Building in the AMHI Complex (Eastside), just off Hospital Street on Blossom Lane in Augusta.

From I-95 South:

Take Exit 30 off I-95 and bear right on Western Avenue. Go straight through town past all lights. At rotary take the second exit, over Memorial Bridge. Just before second rotary bear right onto Stone Street (if you miss this turn, take next right). Stone Street becomes Hospital Street and narrows after a Rite Aid store on your left. Take the next right, Tyson Drive, into the AMHI Complex. Take first right onto Blossom Lane which passes in front of the Deering Building. Continue a bit further to a parking lot on your right.

From I-95 North:

Take Exit 30A (Augusta Airport) and keep right onto Western Avenue. Go straight through town past all lights. At rotary take the second exit, over Memorial Bridge. Just before second rotary bear right onto Stone Street (if you miss this turn, take next right). Stone Street becomes Hospital Street and narrows after a Rite Aid store on your left. Take the next right, Tyson Drive, into the AMHI Complex. Take first right onto Blossom Lane which passes in front of the Deering Building. Continue a bit further to a parking lot on your right.



cut here to keep phone numbers handy

FREQUENTLY REQUESTED TOPICS	PHONE
Ag in the Classroom	287-7628
Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund	287-7620
Agriculture Today Newsletter	287-7628
Animal Welfare	287-3846
Arborist Licensing	287-3891
Bats	287-7544
Beef Industry	549-5972
Bees/Honey	287-7562
Beverage/Redemption	287-3841
Browntail Moth	287-2431
Christmas tree growing	225-3031
Composting Manure	287-7531
Cranberries	287-7620
Dairy Promotion Council	287-3621
Dairy Farms and Producers	287-3741
Deer Farming Regulations	287-3701
Dog Licensing	287-3846
Poultry Inspection	287-3701
Egg Inspection	287-7590
Fairs/Schedule	287-7634
Farmland Protection	287-7520
Farmers' Markets	287-7561
Fertilizer - Stores Selling (Regulations)	287-2161
Food Assistance Program (800-452-1926)	287-7513
Food and Drug Administration (Federal)	622-8268
Food Establishment Licenses	287-3841
Food Stamps (Individual) DHS	624-8200
Fruit and Vegetable Stands	287-3841
"get real. get maine!" (marketing campaign to "buy local")	287-3491
Insect Infestation	287-7616
International Trade	287-9072
Labor- Farm/Alien	287-7620
Livestock (inspection/licensing/permits/cows/goats/sheep)	287-3701
Maple Syrup	287-3221
Organic Farming (MOFGA)	568-4142
Nutrient Management and nuisance complaints	287-1132
Nursery License	287-3891
Pesticides Control	287-2731
Plant Sales and Licensing	287-3891
Potato Promotion	769-5061
Senior FarmShare farmer information	287-7561
Senior FarmShare senior information	1-877-353-3771
Spring Water	287-3841
Statistics	287-7520
Tree Growth Tax Law, Property Taxation	287-7520
Water (Drinking) Test - DHS Health Lab	287-1710
Weights and Measures, Wood Measurement	287-3841
Wild Blueberries	288-2655

(Here's where to call to get real answers...)



Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources

Location:
**Deering Building,
AMHI Complex, Hospital Street**

Mailing address:
**28 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0028**

Telephone numbers:
TEL **207-287-3871**
TTY **207-287-4470**
FAX **207-287-7548**

Department web site:
www.maine.gov/agriculture/

Marketing web site:
www.getrealmaine.com



Dedication

During this biennium, the Department lost a colleague, friend and tireless supporter of Maine Agriculture. Linda Smith Dyer was born in Lewiston and grew up in Monmouth on her family's dairy farm. She graduated from the University of Maine Law School in 1980 and founded the law firm of Dyer & Goodall where she practiced law, specializing in legislative advocacy, until 1999 when she was appointed to the Department. Linda served as Deputy Commissioner from July 1999 to August 2000 and was the elected Chairperson of the Northeast Dairy Compact. She passed away September 27, 2001.

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
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