

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)
251 Causeway Street
Boston MA 02114

Department Website: www.Mass.gov/agr

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Farm Viability Enhancement Program
2. Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program
3. Federal State Market Improvement Program
4. Farm Energy Discount Program
5. MA Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

1. Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP) – A business planning and technical assistance program that provides grants to farmers who make a commitment to keep their farmland in agricultural use.

- **Program Goals** - Improve your farm's economic viability, increase environmental integrity, keep your land in farming by making it profitable.
- **The Application Process**
 - Request for Response (RFR) to be announced on or about 4/1/07 – for updates check www.Mass.gov/agr
 - **To be placed on a mailing list for FVEP announcements contact Craig.Richov@state.ma.us or call Deb Mayo at 617-626-1723**
RFR contains the application and policy information for the program
 - Eligibility – min. 5 acres in agricultural use, min. 3 years as commercial enterprise, for cranberry farms a min. 3 acres of bog in production and a ratio of non-wetland (upland)
 - Criteria for Selection – degree of threat, number of acres to be protected, significance of production, experience of operators, identification of viability strategies to address problems, presence of direct marketing or value-added activities, suitability and productivity of the farmland
- **Schedule for FY 2008**
 - April through June – Open Application Period
 - June 2007 - Applications due
 - September 15, 2007 - Letters of Acceptance and Rejection mailed
 - Orientation Meetings – Late September/Early October
 - October through April – Business Plan Development
 - March through June 2008 – Execution of Contract and Covenant, grant payment

FVEP Contact: Craig Richov 617-626-1725 or Craig.Richov@state.ma.us

2. Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP) – Provides funds for the mitigation and/or prevention of impacts on natural resources that may result from agricultural practices. Primarily a water quality program. Participants are reimbursed for approved costs of materials up to \$25,000.

- Applications – RFR should be available in April 2007 and accepted on a rolling basis for a number of months into the fall.
- Eligibility – Min. 5 acres actively devoted to agricultural use, or 3-acre min in bogs, or 5,000 square feet in greenhouse production. NRCS Conservation Plan required for most water quality proposals. Shellfish operations must possess a current shellfish aquaculture license.

AEEP Contact: Gerard Kennedy 617-626-1773 or Gerard.Kennedy@state.ma.us

3. Federal State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP) - A USDA grant program administered by state departments of agriculture that provide funds to organizations for market development, market research and marketing education projects.

- Deadline for applications at DAR is February 1, 2007.
- For more information and a copy of Program guidelines contact: Mary Jordan 617-626-1750 or Mary.Jordan@state.ma.us

4. Farm Energy Discount Program – DAR certifies farm eligibility for a ten percent discount on electricity or natural gas rates. DAR accepts farm Energy Discount Eligibility Applications throughout the year. To maintain the Farm Discount, applicants are required to submit a yearly renewal application to DAR.

Farm Energy Discount Program contact: Kent Lage 617-626-1702, or Kent.Lage@state.ma.us

5. MA Farmer' Market Nutrition Program – DAR certifies farm vendor eligibility to accept Farmers' Market Coupons. Certification involves discussing the regulations for the program, as well as procedures for receiving payment for redeemed coupons. To become certified, contact David Webber at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

David Webber 617-626-1754, or David.Webber@state.ma.us