



IFNPAC Q2 Meeting

Interagency Food and Nutrition Policy Advisory Council

Friday June 16, 2023

10:00– 11:30am

Rhode Island Commerce

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Welcome and Introductions

Department of Environmental Management (DEM)

Terry Gray (Chair), Acting Director

Ken Ayars, Chief of Agriculture

Department of Health (RIDOH)

Randi Belhumeur, Health Program Administrator

RI Commerce Corporation (RICC)

Julianne Stelmaszyk, Director of Food Strategy

Department of Education (RIDE)

Jessica Patroliia, Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator

Department of Administration (DOA)*

Laura Hart, Policy Director

**New members as of Q2*

Governor's Office*

John Colantoni, Policy Advisor

Office of Healthy Aging (OHA)

Maria Cimini, Director

Department of Human Services (DHS)

Jenna Simeone, Assistant SNAP Administrator

Department of Corrections (DOC)

Terrence McNamara, Administrator Physical Resources

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Approve Q1, 2023 Meeting Minutes
3. FY24 food policy update
4. Deep Dive: Farmland Viability & Climate-Smart Agriculture Policies
5. Update on Relish Rhody 2.0 Strategic Planning process
6. Public Comment

Legislative Updates FY24

**RHODE
ISLAND**

FY24 Legislative Updates

INCLUDED in FY24 Budget:

Rhode Island Community Food Bank: \$3.55M

- EOHHS received \$550,000 for food collection and distribution through the Rhode Island Community Food Bank
- Rhode Island Community Food Bank line item is \$3M (from ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Funds) for enhanced support to households in need, including those that received enhanced nutrition benefits during the public health emergency

Interagency Food & Nutrition Policy Advisory Council

- The council's membership increased from 7 members to 9 members to include participation from Commerce and the department of children, youth & families (DCYF)

Litter Control Permit (Article 4, Section 6)

- Elimination of the requirement for businesses that sell to-go food or beverages to obtain and annually renew a litter control participation permit.
- The budget also includes \$100,000 from general revenues to support litter removal efforts.

Farmland Preservation: \$2.5M

- Administered through RIDEM, the funding will eliminate economic pressures on farmers to sell land for residential or commercial development by purchasing development rights.

Litter Control Permit

- Elimination of the requirement for businesses that sell to-go food or beverages to obtain and annually renew a litter control participation permit.
- \$100,000 from general revenues to support litter removal efforts.

Local Agriculture and Seafood Program: \$700K

- LASA grants administered through RIDEM
- The FY 2023 enacted budget includes \$700,000 for the local agriculture and seafood program grants for small businesses in the food sector. This reflects a commitment of \$200,000 of annual ongoing support and an additional \$500,000 in one-time funding for FY 2023. The GA approved \$700,000 for FY 2024 to continue the extra \$500,000 for another year.

Meals on Wheels/Elderly Nutrition Services: \$680K

- The GA approved \$680,000 from general revenues for elderly nutrition services, which is \$100,000 more than enacted and includes \$630,000 for Meals on Wheels. Administered through EOHHS

FY24 Legislative Updates

NOT INCLUDED in FY24 Budget:

"HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL"

- [HB 6007](#) - AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- FEDERAL AID (Requires all public schools to make reimbursable breakfasts and lunches available to all students under the rules and regulations of the USDA and the RI department of education.)
- held for further study

FOOD DONATION TAX CREDIT

- [Article 6, Section 5](#) - The GA did not include the Governor's proposal for a new non-refundable tax credit of 15%, capped at \$5,000 of the value of donated food products to a food bank from local farmers and food producers.
- [HB 5803](#) - AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- TAX CREDIT FOR FOOD DONATION (Provides a tax credit for food donations by qualified taxpayers to nonprofit organizations.)
- held for further study
- [SB 517](#) - AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- TAX CREDIT FOR FOOD DONATION (Provides a tax credit for food donations by qualified taxpayers to nonprofit organizations.)
- referred to Senate Finance

Deep Dive: Understanding Farm Viability & Climate Smart Agriculture Policies & Programs

GUEST SPEAKERS

Farming in Rhode Island Amidst a Changing Climate

Andrew Morley, Sweet & Salty
Farm & Member of RI Farmers
for Climate Action

Successful Models in Massachusetts f

Melissa Adams, Farm Viability and
Agricultural Business Training Programs

Gerry Palano, Energy Programs

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Can New England feed itself in years to come?



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A REGIONAL APPROACH TO FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE

MAY 2023



New report can help us understand the road to regional food system resiliency by 2030

“All New Englanders got a taste of the shortcomings of relying entirely on a global supply chain when we couldn’t get certain foods during the height of the pandemic...As food suppliers and retailers scramble to meet demand through a brittle supply chain, New England has land right here within our borders that can be used to make us more resilient in the face of disruptions such as climate change. But it will take strong policy initiatives to get there.”

Brian Donahue, Professor Emeritus at Brandeis University and report co-author

KEY FINDINGS:

- 1 million more acres of land will need to come under production
- Diets will need to shift to - more fruit/veg, seafood, less processed foods.
- Food system employs 1 million people (10% of all jobs) and generates \$190 billion in sales (11% of all sales)...however not enough people are choosing to work in the agriculture and fisheries industry to meet demand.
- Grocery stores, fast food and restaurants account for 84% of food sales, however, accessing these markets has been a barrier for local small businesses and producers.

FARMING IN RHODE ISLAND AMIDST A CHANGING CLIMATE

Andrew Morley – Sweet and Salty Farm, Little Compton, RI

Who We Are: Sweet and Salty Farm



A Solar Powered Farm



From the Cows...



From the Cows...



From the Cows...



...To the Cheese and Yogurt Makers...



...To the Cheese and Yogurt Makers...



...Through the Tastemakers...



...Through the Tastemakers...



...To the Markets...



...To Your Tables



Q: Impact of Climate Crisis On Ag in RI

Two Simultaneous Dynamics:

- 1) Climate change will inevitably cause a disruption to the global food system leaving Rhode Island more dependent on local food sources in a crisis
- 2) Climate change will make growing and producing food in Rhode Island more difficult

Rhode Island's Farms are Critical



Rhode Island's Farms are Special

- Typical Grain Belt Farm



- Typical Rhode Island Farm



The Looming Climate Threat for RI Farms

- Water and Wind Are Our Challenges



The Looming Climate Threat for RI Farms

- Water and Wind Are Our Challenges



Supporting Our Soils is Key to Resilience

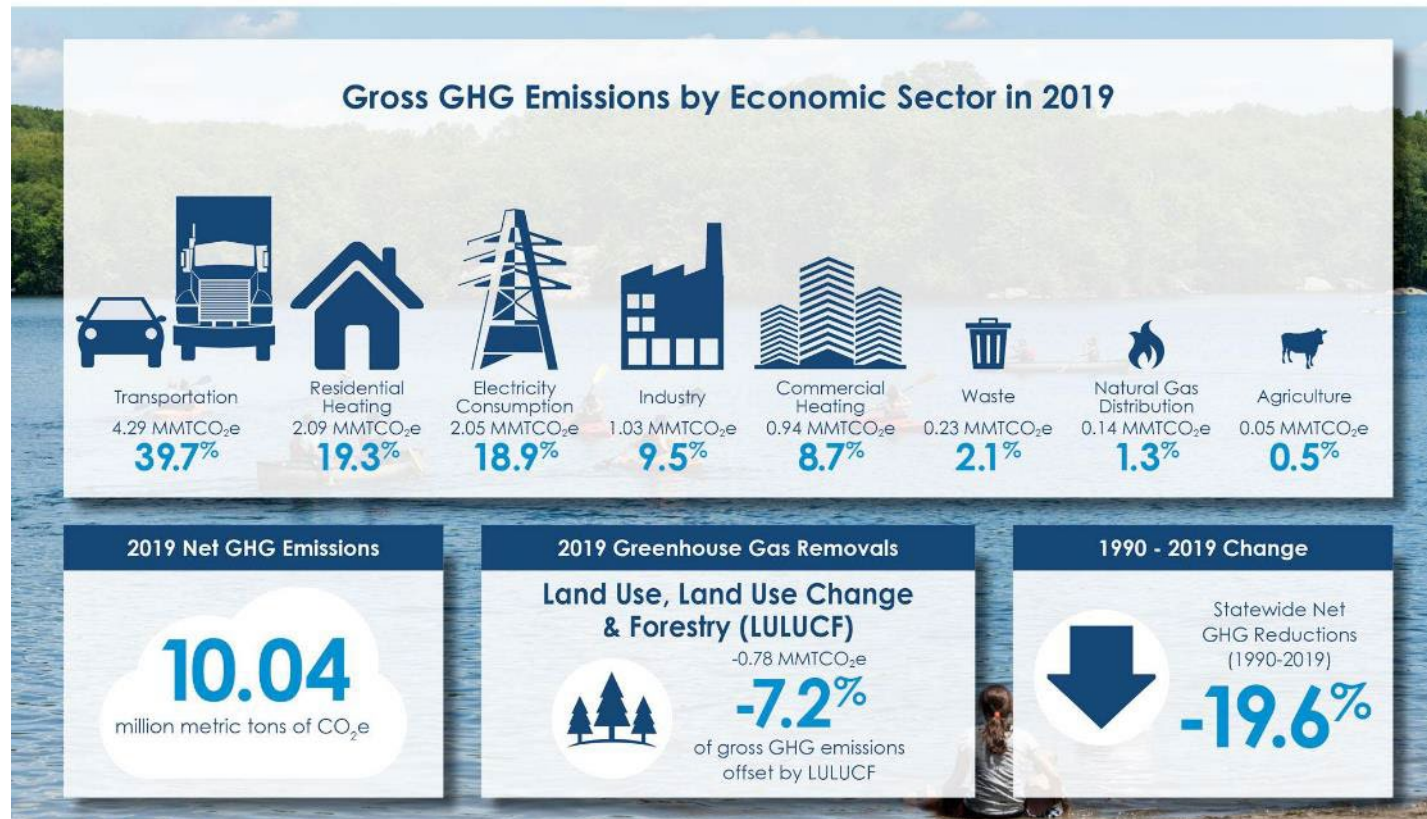
Soil Regenerative Agriculture:

“One that, at increasing levels of productivity, increases our land and soil biological production base. It has a high level of built-in economic and biological stability.”

Robert Rodale, 1983

Farm Soils As Climate Solution

1990-2019 Quick Facts Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory



The Way Forward: Build Local Capacity

- Support Farm Viability in Rhode Island Today
- Improve Farmland Access and Develop Next Gen Farmers
- Support Climate Resilience on Farms
- Develop Markets for Rhode Island Products
- Exercise Local Food Supply Chains Early and Often

WE CAN DO THIS!





Farm Viability Programs Overview

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

FARM VIABILITY PROGRAMS

Purpose: to provide business planning, technical assistance & grants to increase the viability of farm businesses

FVEP

Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP) – established commercial farms with 5+ owned acres in production; land ownership required for short-term covenants to keep land in agricultural use

AIP

APR Improvement Program (AIP) - for farms that own land permanently protected through state APR program. Grant funds for infrastructure improvements.

MEGA

Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA) Program – for beginning farmers in business 1 to 10 years; secure land access required – may be leased or owned.

ANNUAL TIMELINE – VIABILITY PROGRAMS

- Open application period (*6-8 weeks in spring*)
- Application review (*late spring/summer*)
- Notification of preliminary selection (*by Sept*)
- Orientation visits at farms (*Sept*)
- Phase I: Business planning & technical assistance (*Oct-March*)
- Phase II: Grant contracts (*implementation timelines for projects vary by program*)

VIABILITY PROGRAMS

Phase I: Business Planning & TA

- Each farm assigned a business planner to work with one-on one to develop a farm business plan including financial projections
- Additional technical assistance available based on individual farm needs through contracted service providers. Examples include:
 - Succession Planning
 - Quickbooks assistance
 - Marketing plans
 - Websites
 - Building layout/evaluation
 - Pasture management

VIABILITY PROGRAMS

Phase II: Capital Grants

- Upon approval of business plan, grants may be offered for on farm capital improvements identified in the plan to achieve goals
- Eligible uses - farm buildings or equipment, resource improvements

FVEP: Grants of \$75,000 - \$165,000 in return for covenant

AIP: \$60,000 - \$125,000 with 20% match

MEGA: \$10,000 - \$30,000 with 50% match



Project examples:

- farm store
- livestock housing
- equipment storage barn
- hay balers/wrapper
- processing facility
- wash/pack facility
- tractor
- Fencing
- Chicken coop

PROGRAM IMPACTS

FVEP since 1998:

- 466 farms
- >\$22 million in grants
- 45,804 acres protected

AIP since 2009:

- 115 farms \$8,135,000 in grants
- \$647,921 in business and technical assistance (\$5,634 av/farm)

MEGA since 2010 :


- 110 farms
- \$939,860 in grants
- \$448,992 in business planning & technical assistance (\$4,082 av/farm)


More Information

www.mass.gov/agr




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Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture

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For grant program pages and Grants Story map:

www.mass.gov/guides/agricultural-grants-and-financial-assistance-programs



Environmental & Energy Grant Program

Gerry Palano

Energy Programs

What programs exist to help farmers adapt to a changing climate, adopt “climate-smart” practices and address climate-related risks?

- Climate Smart Agricultural Program (CSAP)
 - 3 fiscal years going on 4th
 - \$1.25 – \$1.50 million + funding per year
 - 75 - 100+ applicants/year
 - 50-60 +/- awards/year



Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

Goals: To link all of MDAR's environmental
grant programs into one application

AEEP + ACRE + ENER



Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

AEEP + ACRE + ENER

AEEP = Ag Environmental Enhancement Program

ACRE = Ag Climate Resiliency & Efficiencies

ENER = Ag Energy Grant Program

AEEP

- Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP);
- Funds the implementation of agricultural conservation practices that reduce or prevent negative impacts to the Commonwealth's natural resources that may result from agricultural practices while maintaining sustainability and productivity of the agricultural operation.
- Practices funded include those that prevent direct impacts on water quality, ensure efficient use of water, and address agricultural impacts on air quality or demonstrate other conservation benefits or environmental goals.

ACRE

- Agricultural Climate Resiliency & Efficiencies (ACRE):
- For the implementation of practices that address the agricultural sector's vulnerability to climate change, adapt to or mitigate climate changes, and improve economic resiliency.
- Example projects are practices that improve soil health, protect water resources, conserve water, and increase energy efficiency.

ENER

- Formerly the AgEnergy Grant Program, this is a competitive grant program that funds agricultural energy projects in an effort to improve energy efficiency and the adoption of clean and alternative energy by Massachusetts farms.
- The goal of the program is that farms can become more sustainable and the Commonwealth can maximize the environmental and economic benefits from these technologies.



Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

Two Sections:

- I. Adaptation & Mitigation (non-energy)
- II. Energy

Can apply to one or both sections



Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

Section I: Adaptation & Mitigation

Eligibility:

- MGL 128.1A – Commercial Ag
 - Minimum of 3 years
- No acreage requirement
- Leased property is ok



Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

Section I: Adaptation & Mitigation

Amounts:

80% of total project costs up to \$50,000



Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

Section I: Adaptation & Mitigation

Eligible Projects:

- Soil Health
- Water Conservation
- Water Quality
- Adaptation
- Mitigation

Some Example Adaptation Projects

Dairy & Livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure changes to reduce heat stress – improve ventilation• Installation of fans for improved air-flow• Sprinklers or misters to improve evaporative cooling• Structures for pasture shading• Increase water availability for livestock
Crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversification to perennial food crops• Updated water management techniques (improve/add irrigation)• Install hoop houses, high tunnels for controlled environment• Install/enhance drainage systems

Some Example Mitigation Projects

Project Area	Description	Project Examples
Water Conservation	Conservation practices that work towards improving agricultural water-use efficiency, with further benefits of climate resiliency and response planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailwater recovery • Automated irrigation systems/upgrades • Irrigation upgrades • Rainwater harvest systems • Sub-irrigation systems (ebb & flow, trough benches, drip irrigation)
Water Quality	Conservation management practices and systems that help prevent impacts on water quality by reducing runoff that may result from agricultural uses of the land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manure storage • Exclusion fencing & watering facilities • Stream crossings • Small scale composting for manure management (including equine) • Heavy use area • Fertilizer/pesticide storage • Chemical mixing & handling
Soil Health	Conservation practices to improve soil health that increase organic matter and improve microbial activity, sequester carbon, and increase water filtration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation tillage equipment • No-till drills/Roller crimpers • Precision ag equipment • Manure injectors • Fencing for rotational grazing • Silvopasture development



Climate Smart Agriculture Program
(CSAP)
Section II: Energy



Agricultural Energy Program (ENER)

Goals: to help farms improve their sustainability through implementing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects; also contributes towards state: food plan, energy efficiency/clean energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals.



Agricultural Energy Program (ENER)

General Eligibility Requirements:

- MGL 128.1A – Commercial Ag
 - Minimum of 3 years
- No acreage requirement
- Leased property is ok



Agricultural Energy Program (ENER)

Primary Technical Requirements:

Energy Audits

Technical Assessments



Agricultural Energy Program (ENER)

FY2024 CSAP AgEnergy Grant

Funding Amounts:

Maximum of \$50,000 with a demonstrated 20%
match



Agricultural Energy Program (ENER)

Eligible Projects:

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewables

Energy Efficiency Projects

Sector	Priority Projects
Cranberry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cranberry irrigation engine upgrades to new electric pumps
Dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plate Cooler• Variable Speed Vacuum Pumps• Refrigeration Heat Recovery / Free-Heaters
Greenhouse & Nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thermal Blankets / Energy Screens• Envelope Insulation• Natural Ventilation• Root Zone Heating• Electronic Temperature Controls
Maple Sugaring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Efficiency Evaporators• Reverse Osmosis (RO) Systems• Heat Recovery & Steam Enhanced Units
Other Technologies*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process Heat Recovery• High Efficiency Refrigeration (optimally with heat recovery)• Cold Storage Systems• New energy efficient electrical equipment including heating and cooling• Building envelope efficiency and insulation improvements

Renewable & Alternative Projects

Priority Projects

- Photovoltaics (PV) with island capable battery storage for new or existing PV
- Integrated greenhouse solar PV glazing
- Solar irrigation systems
- Renewable clean heating and cooling technologies*
- Wind systems
- Solar thermal technologies
- High efficiency air source/ground source heat pumps/Geothermal
- High efficiency advanced gasification wood biomass heating systems
- Advanced biomass (gasification) Outdoor Wood Boilers (OWB)
- All-electric agricultural farm tractors

* Renewable heating & cooling technologies will be a priority and there is a preference for no longer funding fossil fuel(oil, propane, or natural gas) equipment per the goals of the Massachusetts interim 2030 Clean Energy & Climate Plan

CSAP

- **How are these programs funded and administered (e.g. staffing/structure)? What have been the successes and challenges with administering them? What has been the impact and do you see any opportunities to strengthen the programs?**
- Funded by State capital funds; administered by project coordinators associated with those technologies, all under the Division of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance. (DACTA).
- Successes have led to projects being built that would probably would not have been built due the burden on the average family farm; successes have led to improved infrastructure and along with reduced and in some cases fixed energy costs due to renewables. They have also contributed to the state's goals.
- Successes: enabling farms to take less time filling out multiple forms for multiple grants requests.
- Challenges are all grants are reimbursable which means the farm must come up with all the funds first, build the project then get reimbursed – this is not an easy task for many farms.
- The impact has been farms with improved infrastructure that are more sustainable and are able to devote more attention to other important farming aspects such as food safety needs for which there also exists a program funded by the state.
- Opportunity to strengthen the programs includes more education on grant writing, being able to identify the farm's specific needs through grant funding opportunities.
- Improvements – some form of a revolving loan fund that would alleviate the upfront funding challenge.

Contacts

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www.mass.gov/agr

STATUS UPDATE

RELISH RHODY 2.0

Developing a renewed food vision for
Rhode Island towards 2030

Timeline



JAN 2022

MAR 2024

2024 - 2030



2023			2024	
JANUARY – APRIL		MAY – SEPTEMBER	DECEMBER	MARCH - APRIL
Establish Advisory Board	Conduct <i>Five Year Relish Rhody Impact Report 2017 – 2022</i>	Stakeholder engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews/focus groups - 25-30 “food system issue briefs” - Fall statewide gathering 	Publish Draft Strategy for public comment	Launch final Strategy and begin implementation

Status Update: Relish Rhody 2.0 Planning



- ✓ Funding awarded to Commerce from Henry P. Kendall Foundation to support the planning process
- ✓ 5 Year Impact Report will be published early July
- ✓ 28 Advisory Board members gathered to “kick-off” the planning process on June 8th
- ✓ New RFP will be published soon and consultant selected by early August

