

Massachusetts

The Honorable Douglas P. Gillespie

Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
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Base Grant: \$500,000
Specialty Crop Grant: \$640,000
Total Block Grant: \$1,140,000

Southern Massachusetts

“Buy Local” Campaign:

Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP), \$60,000.

This project funded the implementation of the “Southeastern Massachusetts” Buy Local campaign. Goals to be achieved through the implementation of this project included: 1) Continue to connect consumers to local farms, farmers and farm products, which offer them a bountiful supply of fresh, nutritious and tasty food, healthy, vibrant plants and trees, gorgeous bouquets of cut flowers, naturally fresh seafood and an array of value-added products; 2) Continue to connect farmers to direct-marketing opportunities and wholesale markets; 3) Develop and implement farmer and consumer surveys to evaluate the program and 4) Develop strategies to make the campaign self-sustainable. The success of these goals include: 1) Approximately 240,000 SEMAP Harvest Handbooks were printed and distributed to consumers; 2) The SEMAP “Buy Local” display was used extensively at a variety of events, conferences and meetings; 3) Local cable station (DCTV) produced the “From Farm to Feast”; 4) SEMAP materials were made available to farms and farm stands, and offered to all consumers at events, conferences and meetings; 5) Continued coordination and support of farmers markets in the SEMAP area; 6) Farmer and Consumer surveys showed more interest from both parties to continue the work being done on educating consumers on local products and providing the tools and resources to the agricultural industry to promote their activities. More promotion through advertisement and television was also stressed through the survey results.

Native and Low-Maintenance Plants:

Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association, \$22,003.

Funding was provided to develop a pocket guide of native and low-maintenance plants. The Education and Research Committee of the

MNLA initiated the concept for the pocket guide as they had observed that gardeners are becoming more selective in their choice of trees and shrubs for the landscapes. Also, they seek plants that not only are attractive but also adapt readily to the Massachusetts climate and require less maintenance and fewer applications of pesticides and other interventions. The purpose of this guide is to encourage the use of landscape plants that are low maintenance. These plants typically have few pest problems and are adaptable to the prevailing climatic and soil conditions in Massachusetts. Also, since many home gardeners are looking to incorporate more native plants into their landscapes, this guide provides a listing and information on native trees and shrubs that are suited to those landscapes and are generally available in the nursery trade. The native species listed are specifically native to areas of Massachusetts.

Business Development:

Open Field Foundation – The Pioneer Valley Milk Marketing Cooperative, \$28,000.

This project funded a feasibility study of creating a milk processing facility in Western Massachusetts. The PVMMC felt it was important for their cooperative’s future that it have a secure processing plant before the cooperative increases and expands its markets. PVMMC looked for alternative processing capacity within Massachusetts but could find none that were either big enough to handle their volume nor small enough to be able to segregate their unique product. A feasibility study was conducted that looked at two stages for a fluid milk processing plant, and to evaluate the necessary break-even point of a plant based on size and location. The first stage looked at building costs and structure, equipment costs, operating costs and plant capacity. The second stage involved the creation of a full business plan for operating the plant and an analysis of the market possibilities needed to achieve the operating volume necessary to make the plant viable. A new processing facility will give

**BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT:**
Continued...

PVMMC a secure processing and packaging plant for Cooperatives' brand, and permit it to diversify its product line.

Cranberry Promotion and Pest Control:
Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Assoc. \$237,500.

Funding was provided to implement a domestic campaign promoting cranberries as well as the development of a cranberry weevil control. The overall objective for the domestic campaign was to increase U.S. consumption of fresh cranberries and cranberry products by increasing awareness of the health, flavor and convenience benefits that cranberries offer. Primary messages about health was supported by secondary message about flavor and convenience. The initiation of a domestic promotions program in the industry was a massive undertaking. There are over a dozen stakeholders in the program outside of the growers themselves. The establishment of a generic promotion advisory committee to help with the coordination and direction of the program was the first step. The Scientific Advisory Board assisted in the development of a truth squad, which analyzed news stories on cranberry health claims and made technical comments or corrections. The industry established a professional speakers bureau made up of 13 health professionals including researchers, health TV personalities, dietitians, and ADA spokespeople. The speaker's bureau was used in a media tour during National Cranberry Month. There were exhibits at the American Dietetic Association Annual Meeting as well as at Regional Dietetic Association Meetings. The cranberry healthprofessionalweb site (www.cranberryinstitute.org) was upgraded to include specific offerings to health professionals including press releases; facts and health research links and releases on emerging research. A website for consumers was updated to include health information, new recipes and product availability. A Scientific Symposium and Health Research Conference was held in southeastern Massachusetts and because of its' success, another one is scheduled for this upcoming year. Aggressive consumer campaigns effectively promoted the health benefits as the opportunity to purchase cranberries.

Marketing, Research, & Pest Control:
**New England Vegetable &
Berry Growers Assoc., \$72,000.**

Funding implemented new crop research, a pest control program and a marketing program. Research project were done by the University of Massachusetts research teams on cucumber beetle and bacterial wilt in cucurbits, *Phytophthora*

management in cucurbits and raspberry production in containers. Specialty Crops Trials were implemented at two sites: one at the University of Massachusetts Research Farm and a commercial farm in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Two twilight meetings were held at these locations for farmers to review the progress of these two trials. The results of these trials were also listed on the University of Massachusetts Vegetable Team web page. Approximately 95 farmers attend these meetings. University of Massachusetts Extension worked with farmers in southeastern Massachusetts who participated in a evening consumer activity entitled: "AHA Nights: Arts, History and Architecture." Each event focused on different ethnic crops and included tastings and other cultural activities. Work was also done by the Red Tomato organization to increase education to the retail buyers on the availability and sourcing of local products for the retailer's customers. The Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets developed an aggressive marketing promotional campaign to educate consumers on the benefits of purchasing products at farmers' markets. Through advertisements and promotional activities, the farming community was quite satisfied with the consumer results.

Other Grant Projects:
Berkshire Grown, \$36,670.

Implementation of the "Berkshire Grown" - Buy Local campaign.

**Community Involved in
Sustaining Agriculture, \$75,000.**

Implementation of the "Be a Local Hero" - Buy Local campaign.

Essex Conservation District, \$35,000.

Implementation of the "Buy Fresh" - Buy Local campaign.

Massachusetts Aquaculture Association, \$14,827.

To develop a hard shell clam marketing program.

**Massachusetts
Flower Growers Association, \$110,000.**

To develop a flower grower promotional campaign which will include the development of a video and a "how-to" promote manual.

**Massachusetts
Fruit Growers Association, \$40,000.**

To produce marketing campaign and an apple pest control program.

New England Small Farm Institute, \$31,500.

To assist with the implementation of their New American Farmers Initiative.

New England

McIntosh Growers Association, \$27,500.

To implement a marketing program to increase year-round demand for Massachusetts's apples.

Pioneer Valley Growers Association, \$28,800.

To hire a sales consultant and provide for transportation costs in marketing Pioneer Valley grown produce.

University of Massachusetts and the Livestock Marketing Cooperative, \$50,000.

To establish a web site promoting fodder crops for livestock.