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News Release

Massachusetts Farm Service Agency

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USDA Farm Service Agency and UMass Extension Renew Partnership for Farm Bill Education

(*Amherst, MA*), Sept. 23, 2014 – USDA Massachusetts Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Jon Niedzielski and UMass Extension Director for Agriculture & Landscape Programs Kathleen M. Carroll, are pleased to announce a partnership, authorized by The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill), to educate agricultural producers and stakeholders regarding Federal farm programs outlined in the new Farm Bill.

USDA recently awarded \$3 million to state cooperative extension services – a nationwide network of experts based at land-grant universities – to work with FSA state staff on outreach and education on new Farm Bill programs. UMass Extension is receiving \$10,000 to partner with the Massachusetts FSA in this effort.

“Working together with UMass Extension and with other agricultural stakeholders, we [FSA] will team-up to educate and inform producers regarding the many, and somewhat complex, new farm programs in a concerted effort to assist farmers in making decisions that ultimately impact their way of life and their livelihood,” said Niedzielski.

Over the course of the next several months, FSA and UMass Extension will conduct a series of public information meetings across the state to discuss, in detail, the policies and procedures for disaster, dairy, conservation, commodity and credit programs outlined in the Farm Bill. During these meetings, extension agents will demonstrate several web-based decision aid tools available to producers to assist them in determining the best farm program options for their individual operations. Meeting dates, times and locations will be announced as soon as these details have been confirmed.

“Although Extension and USDA have historically played a prominent role in rural America and the concept of our partnership is not fundamentally new, the expedient implementation of the 2014 Farm Bill established an immediate need for collaboration to ensure that Massachusetts farmers receive the accurate, timely and comprehensive information that they deserve and have come to expect from our organizations,” said Carroll.

For more information, contact the FSA state office at 413-253-4500 or UMass Extension at 413-545-0895.

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