

Resources for New Farmers

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

Beginning Farmer Resources

Website: www.mass.gov/info-details/beginning-farmer-resources

“This page outlines programs and resources offered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and other organizations of particular benefit to new and beginning farmers.” (Description from website.)

Contact: Jessica Camp - Beginning Farmer Specialist, MEGA Program and Exploring the Small Farm Dream course, Conservation & Technical Assistance

Email: Jessica.Camp@mass.gov

Phone: (617)823-0871

Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA)

Website: www.mass.gov/info-details/matching-enterprise-grants-for-agriculture-mega/

“The Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA) program assists beginning farmers who are between 1 and 10 years in business by providing technical assistance (including a mentorship option) and business planning assistance. Grant funds of up to \$10,000, \$20,000, or \$30,000 may be available on a 1:1 matching cost reimbursement basis to assist farmers whose goal is to raise agricultural products and who are developing their farms into commercially viable operations. Funds are typically used for equipment, infrastructure, or other capital improvements to implement strategies identified during the planning process to help their business grow.” (Description from website.)

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American Farmland Trust

Berkshire Farm Futures

Website: www.farmland.org/berkshire-farm-futures

Links to resources specific to Berkshire County, ways to find farmland, information on various conservation programs, tips for using conservation practices on farms to improve soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat, steps to take to plan for agriculture, and the steps and tips to finding capital for farms, including some bookkeeping and business planning information, and finding lenders and grants.

Contact: Jamie Pottern, New England Program Manager

Email: jpottarn@farmland.org

Phone: (413)240-4621

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

How to Start a Farm: Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Website: www.farmers.gov/your-business/beginning-farmers

"New to farming? Want to learn how to start a farm? USDA offers dedicated help to beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA considers anyone who has operated a farm or ranch for less than ten years to be a beginning farmer or rancher.

USDA can help you get started or grow your operation through a variety of programs and services, from farm loans to crop insurance, and conservation programs to disaster assistance." (Description from website.)

Contact: Jack Loomis, MA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinator

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Phone: (413)253-4367

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Berkshire County office

Rebecca Savarese, County Executive Director Rebecca.Savarese@USDA.gov
(413)443-1776 ext. 2

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Berkshire County office

Sylvia Muniz-Gaya sylvia.munizgaya@usda.gov
(413)443-1776 ext. 3

Helpful Local Resource

Berkshire Agricultural Ventures

321 Main Street

Office #202

Great Barrington, MA 01230

(413)645-3594

Email: info@berkshireagventures.org

Website: www.berkshireagventures.org