

# Weekly Market Bulletin

State of New Hampshire  
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Markets & Food  
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## From Your Commissioner . . .

### Lots to be Learned on a Tour of Some NH Farms

Ray Burton of Bath, the man who represents one fifth of New Hampshire's population on the Executive Council and about one half the total land area of the state, is fond of rounding up the heads of state agencies and going off to tour points of interest in his vast district.

Last week I and some other people from NHDAMF hit the road with Councilor Burton to visit some of the diverse agricultural operations to be found in Belknap and Carroll Counties. And as always happens on these excursions, I got some fresh and interesting ideas and viewpoints from folks engaged in the daily toil of working the land.

The summer just ending has been a great one for the businesses that rely on tourism and vacationers in the Winnepesaukee and Mount Washington Valley regions. Lots of visitors, lots of money changing hands—thanks to plenty of sunny weather and the hot economy.

But the crowds and the cars are becoming a two-edged sword for people running farmstands. John Moulton in Meredith has busy Rt. 25 past his farm, which can be great for business. But when traffic starts to back up at the traffic lights at Rts. 3 and 25 in Meredith Village, lines of cars rapidly extend for miles back toward Center Harbor, choking off shoppers who want to visit his stand for corn and cukes.

It's the same for Phyllis Sherman at her large farmstand in East Conway—the continual traffic snarls along the famous Rt. 16 strip leading into North Conway keep customers in the Conway area from even thinking of driving out to Sherman Farm. Thus 75 percent of her business actually comes from Maine communities to the east like Fryeburg, Bridgton and Harrison.

A lot of people would like to ban roadside signs, even directional boards, but signage is the difference between survival and extinction for operations off the main highways. Diana Lewis operates Red Horse Hill Farm in South Tamworth, featuring an elegant bed and breakfast coupled with a stable of 13 Morgans than guests can ride over miles of scenic trails surrounding the farm.

She's a couple of miles back from the main highway, but motorists—including many from Europe this year—are lured in on impulse by an attractive sign.

The impact of the legislative response to the Claremont school funding case weighs heavily on farmers in high valuation towns like Moultonborough where Ed Person of Ledgewood Farm wonders about his operation's viability when hefty new "donor town" property taxes start kicking in.



Until now Person hasn't even considered enrolling his farm in Current Use because the town's fair market value assessments have been so low. Person speculates he may hang in three or four more years, then quit vegetable production, running farmstands and his sideline making high tunnel and hoop greenhouse systems.

The threat of sharply higher taxes down the road hasn't scared people out of building in Moultonborough, though. The town has issued 200 residential building permits this year, up from 100 in 1998, including some for "tear-down" projects where owners demolish modest lakeside cottages and put up lavish trophy houses in their place.

Moving farm machinery back and forth between farms in Conway and Rhode Island is no problem for Richard and Nancy Shartner. They had just finished putting up a crop of sorghum in large round bales that they'll use for strawberry bed mulch and the equipment was due to roll back to Rhode Island the next morning.

The Shartners were irrigating eight acres of dense, lush new strawberry plants with water drawn from the Saco River. The Conway farm extends their berry marketing season and also provides fruit that's used by numerous Rhody ice cream stands in "smoothie" concoctions.

Computers and the internet have become key elements of business for Wayside Gardens in Sandwich. Lisa and Ben Shambaugh use digital cameras to photograph all of their perennial plants in bloom and then use the images to create customized labels that go on the pots and reference graphics for their website.

Many customers walk straight to the plants they want, having already prepared their shopping lists from studying the offerings on their internet-linked home computers.

And a highlight of the Ray Burton tour was a stop at the farm of Charlie Pugh in Chocorua, where he has started 650 turkey poults for his Thanksgiving native bird trade and is also growing out some broilers for customers who want poultry grown right close by. When we were there workers were putting the finishing touches on a new walk-in cooler for his processing room.

Pugh does the chores and runs this entire operation from a wheelchair, the result of a paralyzing traffic accident. Like a lot of successful New Hampshire farms, Pugh's enterprise survives on grit and sheer determination.

Steve Taylor, Commissioner

## Barklice? Not to Worry, They're Harmless

With all of the populations of insects exploding in summer, it's hard to keep track of which ones are good and which ones are bad. So where do common barklice fall?

Barklice are winged insects with small, dark, soft bodies. The young look very similar to adults but have very small to no wings. They appear in late summer and can be found on any kind of tree.

Sometimes called "psocids" because they belong to the Psocidae family, barklice cluster on tree bark. They feed on most dry, organic matter, such as lichen, mold and fungus in tree debris or under bark and stones.

A relative of barklice, booklice are occasionally considered pests when they infest buildings. They can damage books by feeding on starchy materials found in the bindings. The barklice you see on the trees aren't the same.

If you see these insects on your trees, don't be worried. Stanley Swier, UNH Cooperative Extension Specialist in Entomology, assures us that "barklice are harmless and needn't be controlled with pesticides or by any other means."

If you have further questions about common barklice, call UNH Cooperative Extension's Forestry Information Center at 1-800-444-8978.

—Lee Ann Carlson  
UNH Cooperative Extension

## Cover Crops Deliver Great Soil Benefits

Cover crops act as a nutrient bank. Cover crops are capable of using the leftover nitrogen from the previous crop season before it leaches into the ground water.

If the corn silage crop did not use all the nitrogen applied, it leaves some unused nitrate nitrogen in the soil profile. A cover crop will capture that nitrogen and use it for crop growth.

In the spring when the cover crop is killed with an herbicide or plowed down, the nitrogen is released back into the soil during the growing season for the next crop.

In addition, cover crops add organic matter to the soil. Whether the entire plant is left in the field or just the roots, this plant material adds organic matter to the soil.

Organic matter adds water holding capacity to the soil, provides food for soil microbes, improves soil structure and adds to the soil ability to hold nutrients. A little money for seed and a little time to plant are small costs to pay for the many returns that cover crops provide.

—Extension News

## Corn Silage LDPs

Due to widespread problems in the agricultural communities nationwide, USDA has decided to make corn silage eligible for commodity loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs). For years, grain farmers in other areas of the country have either taken advantage of market gains (through the use of LDPs) or borrowed against the value of their stored grains.

Now producers of corn silage, who are enrolled in AMTA/Production Flexibility, can do the same thing. When you have harvested your corn, soybeans, oats, etc., let the Farm Service Agency office know. It can check the daily market rates to see if a market gain is to your benefit through an LDP.

—Miner Institute

## Applied Marketing Course for 'Value-Added' Producers

The NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture is looking for a few good farmers—a dozen in fact—who are developing value-added products from agricultural commodities. This kind of enterprise diversification can be quite lucrative if the farm can successfully manage a whole new set of market and business issues.

To help farmers more effectively deal with these challenges, the Coalition has developed Marketing U, an applied marketing course for value-added agricultural products. Planned for next Jan. 26 & 27 at The Inn at East Hill Farm in Troy, course enrollment will be competitive and supported by scholarships.

Applications will be available in late September and due in early November. Please contact Jean Conklin, Cooperative Extension, RR 1, Box 65F, No. Haverhill, 03774, 787-6944 or at [jean.conklin@unh.edu](mailto:jean.conklin@unh.edu) to be added to the Marketing U mailing list if you are interested or know a farm that might be.

For every \$1 a farmer earns from producing an agricultural commodity, four more dollars are earned by businesses that make the commodity into a customer ready product. Processing, packaging, marketing and other services add value to the commodity.

Marketing U: Market Planning for Value-Added

Agriculture Products will bring Extension, USDA and other agricultural resource professionals together with farmers who are beginning to venture into value-added product development in a two-day intensive interactive course and follow-up market plan critique session to enhance applied marketing knowledge.

Continuing Education Credits (CEU's) will be offered through the University of New Hampshire Division of Continuing Education. The course will address the needs of farmers and agricultural professionals for practical, applied information to guide the development of realistic, workable strategies for marketing value-added farm products.

—Extension News

## Chicken Recycling

An Arkansas chicken farmer has discovered an environmentally friendly way of disposing of dead chickens: Feed them to the residents of his alligator farm. The gators, not picky eaters, gobble up the birds like candy. The alligators are then converted into meat and handbags.

—Miner Institute