

Agriculture in Rhode Island

The face of American agriculture is changing - more rapidly now than ever before. From a team of horses and a good memory in the early 1900s to tractors with the power of 40 to 300 horses and computers with spreadsheets. Today, American farmers provide consumers with better quality food at a lower price. U.S. consumers spend roughly 9 percent of their income on food compared with 11 percent in the United Kingdom, 17 percent in Japan, 27 percent in South Africa, and 53 percent in India.

Agriculture in RI has changed a lot in the last 25 years. We have seen the conversion of potato fields to turf, the emergence of multi-crop farming as the mainstay vs. the exception. We have seen the transformation of the family farm to the family farm enterprise. We have seen our aquaculture industry make great strides toward increased size and production. We have seen our nursery and horticultural industry come to full bloom representing over 66% percent of the agricultural value in our state. We have seen the transformation of our farms from wholesalers to astute retailers, featuring Pick-You-Own of all types of crops. We have seen our farmers utilize agri-tourism concepts along with dramatic increases in farmers markets, roadside stands and other forms of direct marketing. In all the last 25 years have probably produced the most dramatic changes in our State's agriculture industry than any other preceding period.

Did you know that:

*That RI is the largest turf grass producing state in New England.

Or

*That the value of RI farm sales of fresh fruits and vegetables sold directly from the farm to consumers (via farmers markets, roadside stands etc.) is second in the nation at approximately \$20,541 per farm. (Based on 180 direct market locations statewide.)

Or

*That there are over 858 farms in our state of which 80 percent are family run. RI farms are custodians of over 61,000 acres of land.

Or

*That RI agricultural operations gross over 100 million dollars per year which translates into a return of over 48 million dollars directly back to the Rhode Island economy in farm production expenses, and over 13% of all employment in RI has a direct or indirect connection to agriculture.

Or

*That RI ranks 4th in the nation for its value of production per acre at \$1,095.00 and 8th in net farm income per acre at \$163.00.

Or

*That the foundation for all horse breeding in the United States was established in Rhode Island as early as 1676 followed by the establishment of the American Poultry Industry in 1854.

Or

*That the horticultural industry (floriculture, nurseries, sod and greenhouse production) account for over 66% of RI agricultural income.

*Taken from the 2002 Census of Agriculture USDA - NASS

Rhode Island Agriculture Day

May 22, 2007

State House



Sponsored By:
The Rhode Island Department of
Environmental Management
Division of Agriculture



Exhibitors

Charlie's Sugarhouse
124 Hall Road
Coventry, RI 02827

RI Dairy Farms Cooperative
20 Weeden Lane
Jamestown, RI 02835

Kenyon Corn Meal Co.
P.O. Box 221
West Kingston, RI 02892

Kids First/RI Farm to School
5 Richmond Street
Providence, RI 02906

Ocean State Aquaculture Organization
P.O. Box 188
Peace Dale, RI 02883

Little Rhody Foods
67 Cucumber Hill Road
Foster, RI 02825

URI Master Gardners Association
P.O. Box 1749
Charlestown, RI 02813

RI Farm Bureau
2227 Plainfield Pike Rear
Johnston, RI 02919

RI Resource Conservation Development
Council & The RI Rural Development Council
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 45
Warwick, RI 02886

Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative
Cabot Cheese
P.O. Box 5800
Lawrence, MA 01842

SVF Foundation
152 Harrison Avenue
Newport, RI 02840

Confreda Greenhouses & Farms
2150 Scituate Avenue
Hope, RI 02831

Farming Turtles
26 Colorado Avenue
Warwick, RI 02888

RI DEM/Div. of Forest Environment
1037 Hartford Pike
North Scituate, RI 02857

RI Center for Agricultural Promotion
& Education RICAPE
P.O. Box 40940
Providence, RI 02940

RI State Grange
460-B Long Highway
Little Compton, RI 02837

RI/DEM Strategic Planning & Policy
235 Promenade Street, Suite 330
Providence, RI 02908

Dave's Marketplace
1000 Division Street, Suite 20
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Jaswell's Farm
50 Swan Road
Smithfield, RI 02917

URI Cooperative Extension
A Syst Program
1 Greenhouse Road
Kingston, RI 02881

RI Sod Producers
P.O. Box 2
Slocum, RI 02877

Farm Fresh RI
Box 1943
Providence, RI 02912

RI Nursery and Landscape Assn., Inc.
64 Bittersweet Drive
Seekonk, MA 02771

RI Conservation Districts
2490 Main Street
Tiverton, RI 02878

Rhode Island Beekeepers Association
140 Coldbrook Road
Warwick, RI 02888

USDA Farm Service Agency
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 40
Warwick, RI 02886

RI Economic Deveolpment Corp.
315 Iron Horse Way
Providence, RI 02908

Edible Rhody
632 East Avenue
Pawtucket, RI 02860

USDA/NRCS
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46
Warwick, RI 02886

USDA Rural Development
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 44
Warwick, RI 02886

Exhibitors

Speakers

**W. Michael Sullivan, Ph. D,
Director
RI Department of Environmental
Management
Master of Ceremonies**

**Honorable Donald Carcieri
Governor, State of Rhode Island**

**Senator Susan Sosnowski,
Vegetable Farmer, South
Kingstown, RI**

**Senator Kevin Breene, Dairy
Farmer, West Greenwich, RI**

**Dorothy Brayley, Executive Dir.
Kids First RI**

What is Agriculture Day?

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, along with local farmers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, and government agencies believe that every Rhode Islander should understand how food and fiber products are produced, and should value the essential role agriculture contributes to our State's economy and quality of life. Rhode Island Agriculture Day, which we are celebrating on this May 22nd, is a day to honor the people who work to provide us with safe, abundant and affordable agricultural products. It is a day to focus public attention on our State's agricultural industry and to educate our citizens on the many ways agriculture touches their lives each day.