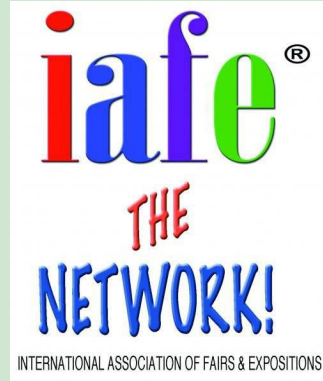




MAAF NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

Issue #3



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Our first Maine fairs of the 2024 season are about to open their gates, and what could be more appropriate than competing in the Children's 4H Agricultural Olympics! This event, held at The 174th Springfield Fair, is just one of many special events planned for the summer enjoyment in each of our fairs. "Meet Our Farmers" is up and running in many fairs, and some locals have been recruited to share their farming stories to those who come to listen. The extremely popular Strawberry Pageant at Pittston Fair has expanded to three categories, and is currently accepting applications. The month of June comes to a close with the Friday Night 12/OC concert at Monmouth Fair.

The Maine legislature finished their 2024 session, failing to pass many bills that would have affected the Maine fairs. The one bill that did pass was the Charitable Gaming Bill. This bill provides that an agricultural society must determine the number of registrants permitted to operate a game of chance during the annual fair.

I am soon to be heading to the IAFE State and Provincial leadership group semiannual conference meeting in Florida. There will be people attending from all over the world. Canada, Australia, and several of our states will be represented as well.

The Maine Department of Agriculture is currently interviewing candidates for the position of Agricultural Promotion Coordinator, of which I am on the interview panel. This is the position previously held by Melissa Jordan.

There are a few calendar updates for our 2024 fair season that you should know. Pittston is June 20th-23rd, Union is July 7th-10th and Opening Day for Windsor Fair will be Saturday, August 24th. See you all at the fairs.

Today my office has received a [very important letter from the Commissioner of Agriculture](#).



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

April 27, 2024

Dear Maine Dairy Farmers,

As you likely know, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 has been detected in dairy herds in several states across the nation. At DACF, our staff has been closely following these cases and the federal response as they have been unfolding. As of this writing, HPAI has not been detected in cattle in Maine or New England.

Earlier this past week, the USDA issued a federal order¹ that takes effect on Monday, April 29, 2024, regarding the interstate shipment of dairy cattle. A guidance document² from the USDA was released Friday afternoon, and since then, we have reviewed the guidance and spent time talking with federal agencies and our counterparts in other states to work to clarify how this guidance might be implemented. We've also been talking directly with farmers, veterinarians, cattle haulers, and others in our state who will be directly impacted by this federal order to help inform additional state-level guidance that we will update on our HPAI webpage (see link below) on Monday.

In the meantime, I want you to know that supporting you, our dairy farmers, and your employees as you navigate through this challenging situation will remain a priority for us at DACF now and in the weeks ahead. We anticipate that we will need to further refine our state-level guidance as new/clarifying information is released at the federal level, and we want to make sure you know where to look for updated information from the Department:

- We have a dedicated Dairy Cattle & HPAI webpage that we will update as new information becomes available to us: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_health/hpai/cattle.shtml
- You can also sign up to receive email updates at: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDACF/subscriber/new>
- You can reach out directly to us at: dacf@maine.gov or (207) 287-3200

What we currently understand is that lactating dairy cattle³ will have to test negative for HPAI before being moved across state borders if they will continue to be part of a milking herd. Positive cases will need to be reported to the USDA by our State Veterinarian. Cows that are destined for a processing plant need not be tested, but will need a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) if they are not displaying symptoms, and must

¹ USDA federal order can be found here: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dairy-federal-order.pdf>

² USDA guidance document can be found here: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/aphis-requirements-recommendations-hpai-livestock.pdf>

³ USDA has stated that it is implementing these requirements immediately for lactating dairy cattle but may implement them for other classes of dairy cattle based on scientific factors concerning the virus and its evolving risk profile.

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WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF

not be shipped if they are. I say all of this with the caveat that we continue to get updates/clarifications from the USDA and will update our online materials accordingly.

The USDA has indicated that federal funds will be available to cover the cost of sample analysis done in an approved National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Laboratory. We understand that farms will incur additional costs, and we are working to identify ways we might be able to help defray or offset those costs. Having access to the USDA's guidance document will help us to better understand what those costs are likely to be. We also want to invite you to be in touch with us about your needs as a producer so we can try to help you navigate any uncertainties.

At this time, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises that there has been no evidence of live virus in pasteurized milk (although fragments of inactive virus have been detected) and that those commercial dairy products are deemed safe. Affected dairy cattle have shown signs of recovery in days or weeks, and according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the risk to the public remains low. One human case of HPAI has been confirmed in an individual who had direct contact with ill animals segregated into the sick pen at a dairy in Texas. The ill person's symptoms were mild, consisting of conjunctivitis-like symptoms. This person did test positive for the HPAI virus but has made a full recovery.

For those working directly with dairy cows, this is the personal protective equipment (PPE) the CDC has recommended for additional protection:

- Disposable or non-disposable fluid-resistant coveralls, and depending on task(s), disposable or non-disposable waterproof apron.
- Any NIOSH Approved® particulate respirator (e.g., N95® or greater filtering facepiece respirator, elastomeric half mask respirator with a minimum of N95 filters).
- Properly fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles or a face shield if there is a risk of liquid splashing onto the respirator.
- Rubber boots or rubber boot covers with sealed seams that can be sanitized or disposable boot covers for tasks taking a short amount of time.
- Disposable or non-disposable head cover or hair cover.
- Disposable or non-disposable gloves.

We are actively identifying where there are stocks of this PPE in Maine and are developing a plan to distribute them to Maine dairies that request it.

HPAI symptoms in cattle include:

- Decreased herd-level milk production.
- Acute sudden drop in production with some severely impacted cows experiencing thicker, concentrated, colostrum-like milk.
- Decrease in feed consumption with a simultaneous drop in rumen motility.
- Abnormal tacky or loose feces, lethargy, dehydration, and fever.

Key recommendations include:

- Monitor herds for symptoms and separate sick animals.
- Milk from sick animals intended for human consumption should be discarded.
- Milk from sick animals intended for calves should be pasteurized or otherwise heat-treated.
- Practice enhanced biosecurity, which includes:
 - Limiting herd exposure to wild waterfowl and other birds, including chickens and ducks.
 - Limiting movements on and off farm.

- Having hand and boot washing stations for those moving in and out of cattle enclosures.
- Having designated clothing for cattle care and chores and keeping that clothing within cattle areas.
- Closely monitoring herd health and reporting HPAI symptomatic dairy animals to veterinarians immediately.

Milk from symptomatic animals should be diverted or destroyed to ensure it does not enter the human food supply. Only milk from healthy animals is authorized for distribution into commerce for human consumption.

I hope this update is useful, and I encourage you to consult the resources on our website, which we will continue to update. I also want to thank you for all you do to feed our families in Maine and beyond. Once again, please reach out for support or with any questions at dacf@maine.gov or (207) 287-3200.

Sincerely,

Amanda E. Beal

Amanda E. Beal
Commissioner

WELCOMING OUR MAINE FAIR AGRICULTURAL QUEENS & PRINCESSES

This past January at the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs annual conference a new tradition was started - Breakfast With Our Queens! If you have been a part of our conference in the previous years, you most likely remember that each year the royalty from individual fairs are welcomed and recognized at our annual banquet. This year we decided to not only introduce them at our banquet, but we also invited them to



our Sunday morning buffet breakfast. Here they were encouraged to introduce themselves to those fair folks eating breakfast but to also explain their roles in their particular fair. As they traveled from table to table, each queen/princess shared her role as a representative from her fair. How her involvement began during the fair, and then extended into a variety of community & statewide activities throughout the calendar year. Most of those enjoying breakfast were amazed at the responsibilities that each girl had undertaken, and shared that they

were looking forward to the 2025 conference for the next Queens and Princesses Breakfast.

We are excited for this program to grow each year, and we invite others to attend next year, if they are able. There are many Maine agricultural fairs that already have some sort of “ambassador” program, but if your fair would like to have more information about getting something started, please reach out. Next year at the 2025 conference, we hope to have an informal work session for all those interested in getting ambassador programs at their fairs. This will be an opportunity to brainstorm and chat. Looking forward to seeing you in ‘25. FMI: contact Liz Chaisson lizard3303@aol.com.



JANUARY 2024 EXHIBITION HALL NOTES

To those of you who attended the Exhibition Hall Workshop on Friday:

Here are the notes that we wrote. Remembering that we were looking back at our 2023 fair halls and what we tried, what worked, what we are going to “tweak” for this summer. Be mindful of other fairground events



that are occurring when you plan something special in your hall. When you plan your competitions, focus on the FUN aspect and work to involve as many community/fair groups as possible. Create a unique space for your exhibits. Move your exhibits in your hall - not always the same items in the same spot. Consider including new displays - LEGOs, Robotics, taxidermy, plant giveaways - highlight local student achievements. Contact the Maine Department of Ag to help highlight ag activities of the season - like, do pumpkin and apple

stuff in the fall. Single out a daily theme - do live demos. Use a tv to show videos. Start now collecting free books and start a “free book” table.

Expand your hall crew - remember “many hands make light work.” Get to know your volunteers and lean on their strengths. Follow up WAY before your fair to contact Grange, Scouts, 4-H, sign language interpreters, judges, etc. Accommodate your exhibitors - how much space do they need? Power? Be open minded and try new ideas. When working with local farmers, take the time that they can give and feature them in whatever way makes sense.

I am looking forward to meeting with you again in January of 2025. I am sure you will have some great stories to share about what worked, what was awful and what was a delightful surprise. But most of all, enjoy the preparation, the event and the reflection. You all do amazing things in your halls! Congratulations in advance!! Junia Norris and Rayma Ashby

MEET OUR FARMERS

The 2024 theme for MAAF is Meet Our Farmers, and several fairs have already introduced their Facebook followers to local farmers who have contributed in unique ways to agriculture in their immediate area. In this May-June issue of our MAAF newsletter, meet a few of our

Maine Women Farmers
[Nauti Sisters Sea Farm](#)
Nautisistersseafarm@gmail.com

Alicia Gaiero, a native of Belfast, Maine, and the oldest of three sisters, is the founder of *Nauti Sisters Sea Farm* (located in Yarmouth, Maine). Alicia launched her venture in 2020 amidst the onset of the COVID pandemic. Despite the challenging times, her farm has experienced exponential growth, expanding over six fold since its inception. Alicia is not only a seasoned oyster farmer but also an active consultant, guiding over 100 LPA and lease applications through Maine’s regulatory process. Committed to community engagement, she participates in workforce development programs, offering opportunities for individuals to gain hands-on experience in marine environments. Holding a 25 ton master captain’s license, Alicia is now gearing up to launch farm tours in 2024. “Last year we were a host for three different organizations focused in workforce development and hosted four interns. This year we continue to work with these three: Maine Career Catalyst Aquaculture Pioneers Program, the University of Southern Maine’s career exploration program and the organization Minorities in Aquaculture. As a director serving on the Maine Aquaculture Association’s board, I am able to represent small



scale aquaculture farms along Maine's coast.”

In May of 2023, Amy joined the team after graduating from college and jumped in to take on the role of farm manager. She manages the farm and the team from early spring through late December, when the oysters are put to rest on the sea floor for over-wintering.

The youngest of the three sisters is Chelsea, who may have the most diverse experience in Maine's working waterfront. She has worked throughout all seasons for the family business, but has also worked on the stern of a lobster boat, as a team member on a mussel farm, and she is also willing to jump into any role that is asked of her on the water.

When asked “What do you like most about what you do?,” Alicia shared the following: “My greatest joy in this business has been to build something that challenges me to learn every day. I feel so fortunate to have created a place to work with my sisters, young women and marginalized people, and to encourage them to try new things and take risks. More than 50 women have come to work on the farm and we plan to continue to grow this number. Ultimately, growing oysters has seemed to become a byproduct of what we do. We are growing strong young people, enhancing their growth mind sets and encouraging each one to try new things. I enjoy being a part of this incredible team and getting to work on the water. My favorite days are the hard ones. We are at the mercy of the waves, the wind and the weather. I certainly don't have most of what we do figured out, but I feel so grateful to have this phase of life to learn. I joke that I am earning my graduate degree from the school of life, and I couldn't enjoy it more.

In 2023 Nauti Sisters Sea Farm was voted Maine's second best oyster in a blind taste test done by chefs and industry experts at the Maine Oyster Festival.

ME Water Buffalo Company
Jessica Farrar
mewaterbuffaloco@gmail.com

Brian and Jessica Farrar, raised on family farms in Maine, decided, one day, to pick up a guinea pig for their kids, and came face to face with their first water buffalo. It was love at first sight and shortly thereafter they began raising water buffalo themselves on their farm in Appleton, Maine. It took a lot of sweat, prayers, hiccups and learning, but, despite the unexpected and devastating loss of Brian in 2022, the dream behind ME Water Buffalo Co. still remains. Jessica and the kiddos push forward raising the herd of water buffalo, milking, making cheese and sharing the adventure with others. This entire family has fallen in love with these animals and hope to pursue any avenues of promoting them. Out of respect for their herd, they continue to incorporate the “whole animal-no-waste” attitude by striving to utilize them for their many



qualities: meat nutrition, delicious and healthy dairy, skulls and horns that are sold, as well as tallow soap and tallow lipbalms. There are so many ways to connect with their farm: Open Farm Days (7/28 11am-4pm), Farm Tours/Tastings (beginning in June and scheduled through August), Private Farm Dinners, Pizza Nights on the Farm and, don't miss this - 2024 Calf Cuddling Days! Saturday, May 18th and June 1st 11 am - 4pm. This is a free event and open to the public. For more information on the opportunities at the ME Water Buffalo Co, text 207-701-7283 or contact Jessica at mewaterbuffaloco@gmail.com.

When asked “What do you like most about what you do?” , Jessica replied : “The things that I like most about what I do are the diversity, flexibility and fulfillment. There's never a dull moment . Each day is different and you always have to be ready for a curveball to derail your plans of the day. Somehow, even after an exhausting day of working, when I collapse into my pillow at night, it is such a fulfilling feeling and I know that I am truly blessed to be doing what I'm doing.” *Again this year: FARM CAMP (ages 5-12 years of age) with these amazing

animals. FMI: contact Jessica.

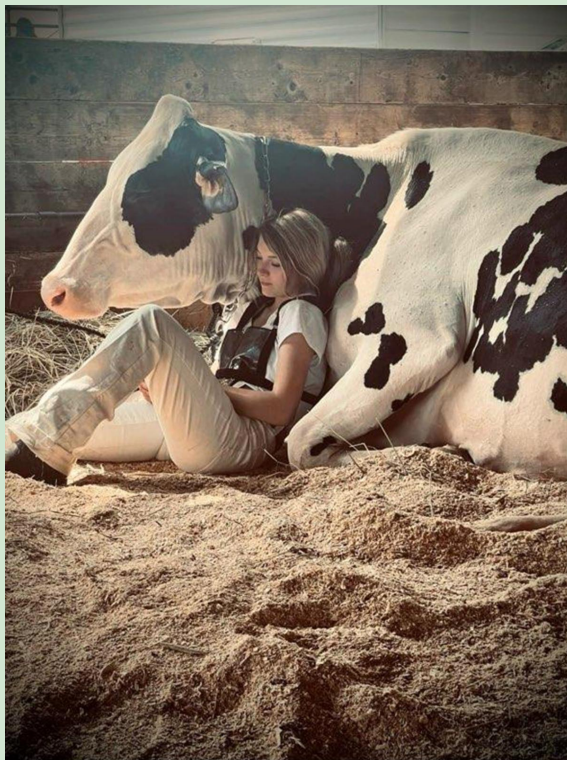


Campbell Family Farms
Darcie Campbell McCarthy
Campbellfamilyfarms@gmail.com

A sixth generation farm located in the southern Aroostook town of Littleton, Maine, Campbell Family Farms and the Campbells are well known in the community. Established in 1885, this farm began as a potato, garden, cows, pigs, chickens and horses farm. The current generation continues on with a large potato business and has added registered Hereford cattle, a riding arena, an organic greenhouse oats, hay and Clydesdale horses. Deborah Campbell, Natalie McCarthy and Heather Campbell are part of the team of Campbell women, but this piece is focusing on Darcie.

Darcie Campbell McCarthy has been the farm manager for Campbell Family Farms Registered Herefords since she was in high school, and she has spent countless hours, working with her sister Nat, fitting and showing her cattle at several Maine fairs. When asked “What do you like most

about what you do?,” her response was: “Farming is my whole life! Between potatoes and animals of all sorts! I work full time at a vet’s office, along with managing a herd of around 40 registered Hereford cows. I love all of what I do! You truly have to love what you do when you farm! Long hours - long days - nonstop!”



Silver Valley Farm
Samantha Davis
New Sharon, Maine

George and Clara Davis started Silver Valley Farm in the 1940’s. Its original focus wasn’t just dairy. They grew crops including corn, beans and cukes. George had a herd of award-winning show Herefords, but eventually sold the breed and switched to dairy, bringing in mostly registered Holsteins. The farm received the Green Pastures award in 1974, and, just recently, again, in 2024, having been chosen based on their pasture quality and forage management, production, herd, milk quality, financial stability and community involvement. Years have passed and sons, Rick and Jim, took over. Today the farm has yet another generation-the fifth generation working side by side continuing the reputation for excellence in Maine’s dairy community.

Samantha Davis, a sophomore at Mt. Blue High School in Farmington, Maine, has been onboard to see the dairy transition to organic in 2007, and is currently shipping milk to Organic Valley. Samantha’s responsibilities on the farm include: “Taking care of the baby calves, making sure that they are all healthy, feeding them their milk, and tagging them with their ear tags so that we know which calf is which. I also milk the cows every night of the week and weekend. Our tie stall holds 60 head for milking and we have around 130 cows total - mostly Holstein but with some highly rated Brown Swiss as well. I clean out the heifer barn with the skid steer and bed it up. I make sure that all the older heifers are happy and

fed. I help out with anything that needs to be done on the farm. What she enjoys the most? “What I enjoy most is being able to be around cows and being able to take heifers and cows to the fairs during the summer and the fall.”

*Comment : Quote: “Samantha is a hard worker with more drive than most people twice her age”, and is the ‘best skid steer operator on the farm’.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE!



The MAAF July-August issue will highlight Maine Farmers Markets under our Meet Our Farmers section!

MEET OUR FARMERS CONTEST 2024!

For 2024, “Meet Our Farmers” will introduce your fairgoers to the next step in our Ag Education Challenge. We have brought the agriculture of Maine with “Maine GROWS” - sharing both familiar and unfamiliar produce across our state. In 2023, through "Maine On My Plate," we expanded what is grown and where to find it, how to use it and how many options are available year round, for more ag information - cookbooks, 4-H, Internet, UMO.



“Meet Our Farmer” brings the “stars” of the Maine ag scene. Who grows our food, who markets it and who knows the most about Maine agriculture? Our Maine farmers. Seasonally, our maple farmers are front and center in the spring, while the pumpkins are harvested and displayed at our fall farm stands. Invite your local farmers to visit your fairgrounds and share their history, their successes and struggles - consider designing a Meet Our Farmers logo for your fair to direct fairgoers to all the farmers who will answer questions and share information. Use the MDACF donated video monitors from the past to show commodity videos of Maine farmers - potatoes, blueberries, Gulf of Maine fisheries, etc. Don't have them? I can direct you to where to get these! Collaborate with local schools to create a “Foxfire” type project and interview farmers. Have fun with this year's Ag Challenge - [MEET OUR FARMERS CONTEST 2024!](#)

Category 1 – Agricultural experiences designed for children. These experiences will include information, demonstrations, and appropriate hands on activities which introduce children to Maine foods on their plates.

Category 2 - Agricultural experiences for ALL fairgoers that educate fairgoers about Maine's vibrant and diverse food scene. This can be a one day program or ongoing throughout your fair.

Division 1: Fairs operating for four concurrent days or less.

Division 2: Fairs operating for five concurrent days or more.

FMI - [Junia Norris](#)

MAINE 2024 FAIR PHOTOGRAPHY &

FAIR POSTER CONTEST

Introducing two new opportunities for Maine fairs to share the uniqueness of their programs.

Category #1: Promotional/Advertising Poster

Description: Annual campaign/theme poster, entertainment line-up poster, promotional poster.
Maximum of two posters per fair



Judging criteria:

- Overall achievement - left to judges' discretion (50 points)
- Representation of the fair (25 points)
- Indicative of Creative Excellence (25 points)

Posters may be submitted at any time during the summer fair season; Deadline for acceptance: October 12, 2024; Send posters to: MAAF, Box 3, Union, Maine 04862 or hand carry to Erik Fitch or Junia Norris.

Category #2: Best Fair Photo - Single Photo

Description: A photo that shows an informative, interesting or unique scene from your fair. Captions are required (limit of 30 words per photo).
Maximum of 3 photos per fair.

Judging criteria:

- Originality and creativity (50 points)
- General appearance (30 points)
- Caption (20 points)

Entries may be submitted in black and white or color. All photos must be submitted in a digital format. There will be one (1) color winner and one (1) black and white winner.

Photographs may be submitted at any time during the summer fair season; deadline for submitting: October 12, 2024; Email photographs to: junianorris@gmail.com

FMI: Contact [Erik Fitch](#)

IMPORTANT FAIR DATES!

- May 4 - MDOA fair evaluators meeting
- May 13-14 IAFE State and Provincial Meeting, Orlando, FL
- May 16-18 - [IAFE Zone 1 Meeting](#), Springfield Sheraton, Springfield, MA
- May 18 - [Pulling Superintendents Spring Training](#)
- June 5 & 12 - MAAF Board of Directors Retreat

June 13-16 - The 174th [Springfield Fair](#)
NEW THIS YEAR - Cash Day Truck Pulls on June 18th
Agricultural Olympics - Children's event plus the LEGO Contest

June 20-23 - [Pittston Fair](#)
Maine Strawberry Pageant age categories: Queen 16-20, Princess 10-13 & Blossom 5-7

June 26-29 - [Monmouth Fair](#)
Remember: 12/OC will be returning to the fair on Friday evening. Born and raised in Portland, Maine, the Nichols Brothers, (aka 12/OC - Jack, Will and Reid and best friend George) are fan favorites throughout Maine and Southern New England. Known for their

latest song "Better With A Beer," this country western band can be frequently found opening for acts in Nashville, TN.

January 24-26 - 2025 [MAAF](#) Annual Meeting

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