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## Massachusetts Farm Energy Program May, 2014

On behalf of the staff at the [Center for EcoTechnology](#) working on the [Massachusetts Farm Energy Program](#), we wanted to let you know how great it has been to talk with many of you on the phone and visit you to learn more about your farming operations and your interest in energy efficiency and clean renewable energy. We are enjoying helping you navigate the complex world of technical services and grants and other financial incentives. In some cases we are learning right along with you – and that’s exciting too. Happy Spring to you – and please keep the calls and emails coming!

**Call us at (413) 727-3090**

**E-mail us at [info@massfarmenergy.com](mailto:info@massfarmenergy.com)**

or **visit** [massfarmenergy.com](http://massfarmenergy.com) and submit a [request form](#) and we will contact you.

### Exciting Opportunities for Farms this Spring!

Hot off the Press!  
Zero Net Energy Grant



The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has announced the **Pathway to Zero** grant program. Funding is available to support feasibility, design and construction efforts for projects that are targeting a **zero net energy outcome**. Grant

applications are due by July 15!

What is zero net energy? According to the DOER, A *Zero Net Energy Building* is one that "...is optimally efficient, and over the course of a year, generates energy onsite, using clean, renewable resources, in a quantity equal to or greater than the total amount of energy consumed onsite."

Grants for commercial and institutional applicants – including farms – are available in one of three categories:

- Feasibility study – Up to \$30,000
- Integrated Design Services – Up to \$50,000
- Construction Costs – Up to \$500,000

Interested? Have questions? To download the application - go to the [DOER grant funding page](#).

Applications are due by July 15. All questions must be submitted to DOER, care of Maggie McCarey, at [zneb@state.ma.us](mailto:zneb@state.ma.us) no later than June 10, 2014.

## **USDA Announces Effort to Cut Energy Costs for Farmers, Ranchers, Rural Small Businesses**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack earlier this month announced that U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking applications from rural small businesses and **agricultural producers for funding to make energy efficiency improvements or to install renewable energy systems. Up to \$12.3 Million in Grants and \$57.8 Million in Loan Guarantees Available In Rural Energy for America Program.**

The funding is being provided through USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

The USDA is accepting applications for:

- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement loan guarantee and grant combinations;
- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement loan guarantees
- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grants

Information on how to apply for REAP funding and on the application deadlines is available on page 25564 of the [May 5, 2014](#)

[Federal Register.](#)

**The application deadline is July 7 for grants & July 31 for guaranteed loans.** It is estimated that the state grant allocation will be approximately \$125-160,000 per state. If applications exceed our state allocation, there may be an opportunity for applications to compete in the national reserve pool.

Additionally, when farm bill funds become appropriated later in the calendar year (approximately November, 2014), a second funding cycle will be announced.

If applications are unfunded during the current cycle, those applications will automatically compete for the next cycle of funds; therefore, we are encouraging applications.

Applications must be submitted prior to the start of any construction in order for those expenses incurred to remain eligible.

- **If applying as a small business, you must be in a rural area.**
- **If applying as a farmer, you are exempt from the rural area eligibility rule.**

Please contact Anne Correia at (508) 295-5151 or [anne.correia@ma.usda.gov](mailto:anne.correia@ma.usda.gov) for applications, or if you have questions about application eligibility.

## **There's Never Been a Better Time to Think About Solar Hot Water!**



The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's Commonwealth Solar Hot Water Program announced **significantly increased incentive rates** for solar hot water construction rebates earlier this year. These new incentives are posted on [the Commonwealth Solar Hot](#)

[Water webpage.](#)

Here are some of the highlights of the new changes:

- Residential projects will now have a rebate cap of the lesser of \$4,500, or 40% the project cost.
- Commercial projects will now have a rebate cap of the lesser of \$50,000, or 40% the project cost.
- Public and non-profit projects will now have a rebate cap of the lesser of \$50,000, or 65% the project cost.
- Projects sited alongside a solar photovoltaic system are now eligible for a \$500 adder.

If you have a year-round demand for hot water – and supply of sunshine – NOW is a good time to consider Solar Hot Water.

Questions? Email the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center at [solarhotwater@masscec.com](mailto:solarhotwater@masscec.com)

**Don't Forget: Energy Grants for Farms in Massachusetts are due May 30!**



Been working on your application to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) for the Agricultural Energy Grant Program (Ag-Energy)? Don't forget – complete applications and necessary documentation are due May 30, 2014!

Ag-Energy grants will fund up to \$20,000 toward eligible renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Examples of priority projects for energy efficiency have included pre-coolers, variable speed vacuum pumps, thermal blankets for greenhouses, reverse osmosis equipment for maple sugaring operations, and high efficiency refrigeration systems.

The farming operation must have received an energy audit/energy assessment, or demonstrate the initiation of such. The applicant must be an agricultural operation as defined by the Massachusetts General Law c.128, Section 1A, and be a legally recognized entity within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To learn more or to apply, please download the application from the [MDAR web page](#). For questions about the grant process or how to prepare for submission, please contact Gerry Palano at MDAR - (617) 626-1706 or [Gerald.Palano@state.ma.us](mailto:Gerald.Palano@state.ma.us).

### **Renewable Thermal Grants Still Available**

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and Department of Energy Resources have extended the deadline for their [Renewable Heating and Cooling and District Heating solicitation](#) to June 30. Construction grants are available for qualifying biomass boiler technology, ground source heat pumps and/or qualified district energy systems. Grants are also available for feasibility, design and engineering studies. Questions? Email: [renewablethermal@masscec.com](mailto:renewablethermal@masscec.com)