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## MAINE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SOCIETY

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Dear Maine farmer,

The Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society and Knowledge Transfer Alliance have teamed up to offer an extremely low-cost weekend workshop in early March to help farmers develop and hone assessment tools for making better financial management decisions.

As a farmer, I am critically aware of the needs of my household, as well as the demands of my land, animals and customers. Sometimes, these inter-dependent activities may appear to be working at cross purposes to each other! Making a great lifestyle into a decent living is often a balancing act that requires tools and skills no less important than a tractor or a hoe.

This weekend retreat is intended to offer a bit of respite -- an opportunity to gather and network with other farmers who have set an entrepreneurial course for success in Maine -- do some critical thinking about your farm business enterprises, get ready to do your taxes, and come away with a set of tools to better assess where your investments of time and equipment could return the highest rewards. Understanding that every successful endeavor has a "secret weapon," we will also assess personal skill sets, farm and facility strengths and weaknesses, passion for what you love to do versus what needs to be done, and offer a template for seeing our work as farmers in a way that helps to make it more **sustainable**.

The group will be small, and there will be sessions to work directly with the advisors as well as in small groups. This is for farms with co-managers, domestic partners, or individual operators.

We want to help. I hope you will sign up today as space is limited, cost is cheap, and there is no time like the present to see Maine's farms become vital again as the Breadbasket of New England.

Sincerely,

Nanne Kennedy, President  
Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society

**Interested in improving your farm's financial and  
production recordkeeping?**

**Want to connect with your customers on Facebook?**

**Lacking the time and expertise to learn these skills?**

**Participate in**

## **The Farm Business Skills Weekend Retreat**

**Friday evening, March 9<sup>th</sup>  
thru  
Sunday noon, March 11th**

**Hosted by**

**Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society**

**and**

**Knowledge Transfer Alliance**

**Bangor Motor Inn, Hogan Road, Bangor, Maine**

**Space is limited; register now!!**

### **The GOAL:**

The goal of this Weekend Retreat is for farmers (individuals and partners/couples) to make measurable progress toward using and customizing farm business management tools, such as improving proficiency using QuickBooks, building your farm's budget and balance sheet, improving recordkeeping, and creating an on-line social network and customer satisfaction survey. The weekend format also provides farmers a concentrated opportunity to talk with, and learn from, other farmer participants.

### **LOCATION:**

The Weekend Retreat will be held in the Gazebo Room of the Bangor Motor Inn on the Hogan Road, Bangor, Maine on March 9-11, 2012.

### **REGISTRATION:**

To register, please contact Andrew Files of the Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society at 207.843.7581 or [afiles@mesas.org](mailto:afiles@mesas.org). **Space is limited**, so register early!!

### **COST:**

The cost of the Weekend Retreat is \$190 (for those lodging at the Bangor Motor Inn) and \$50 (for those with other lodging arrangements). Lunch and dinner on Saturday, as well as snacks and refreshments throughout the weekend, will be provided.

### **NOTES:**

1. Please bring a *wireless laptop* with your version of Quickbooks and any other relevant software you may have. Other materials such as the Excel files used in other Menu blocks listed above will be provided to download and update for your farm. **If you do not have a laptop, please let us know ahead of time so one can be provided for you to use during the workshops.**
2. The intent of the weekend is to provide farmers an opportunity to focus on their farm business. **With respect for everyone's time and the opportunity this retreat provides, we request no children, or pets, be brought to the retreat.**

### **QUESTIONS?**

Concerning the workshop materials, please contact Aaron Hoshide @ (207) 945-6830; or [aaron.hoshide@umit.maine.edu](mailto:aaron.hoshide@umit.maine.edu)

All other questions, please contact Andrew Files – (207) 843-7581 or [afiles@mesas.org](mailto:afiles@mesas.org)

**FARM BUSINESS SKILLS  
WEEKEND RETREAT**  
Hosted by  
**Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society  
and  
Knowledge Transfer Alliance**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Friday, 3/9/12</b>	<b>Saturday, 3/10/12</b>	<b>Sunday, 3/11/12</b>
9-10am		<b>Introductory Session</b>	<b>Seventh MENU Selection</b>
10-11am		<b>First MENU Selection</b>	<b>Eighth MENU Selection</b>
11am-12noon		<b>Second MENU Selection</b>	<b>Wrap-up</b>
12noon-1pm		<b>LUNCH</b>	
1-2pm		<b>Third MENU Selection</b>	
2-3pm		<b>Fourth MENU Selection</b>	
3-4pm		<b>Fifth MENU Selection</b>	
4-5pm		<b>Sixth MENU Selection</b>	
5-6pm		<b>DINNER</b>	
6-7pm	<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	<b>Interactive Discussion</b>	
7-8pm	<b>Farm Evolutions</b>	<b>Website Development Discussion</b>	

**The MENU:**

At the bottom of this page, please select a set of the following topics to work on in one-hour blocks. **Farmers may work on selections/topics in any order they choose; and may work on one selection/topic during more than one block of time.**

- 1) **Quickbooks** – Advanced questions & Trouble-shooting
- 2) **Record Keeping I** – Production in Excel
- 3) **Record Keeping II** – Sales and yield in Excel
- 4) **Record Keeping III** – Expenses in Excel
- 5) **Whole-Farm Excel Budget I** – Build your farm’s budget in an hour
- 6) **Whole-Farm Excel Budget II** – Improve profits on your farm
- 7) **Whole-Farm Excel Budget III** – New direction budget
- 8) **Balance Sheet** – Build your farm’s balance sheet in an hour
- 9) **Free Web Customer Feedback Survey** – Zoomerang
- 10) **Facebook** – Set up your business Facebook page

The Quickbooks selection is one-on-one assistance provided by **Senthil Sockalingam** to address questions and assist with troubleshooting. For the other one-hour blocks, farmers will work on selected topics from the list above while KTA instructors **Aaron Hoshide, Anthony Davis**, and others, rotate between farmers providing guidance as they progress through each selection. **Anders Beal** will lead the web development discussion.

**Create your workshop menu:**

First Selection (Saturday, 10-11 a.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Second Selection (Saturday, 11-12 a.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Third Selection (Saturday, 1-2 p.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Fourth Selection (Saturday, 2-3 p.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Fifth Selection (Saturday, 3-4 p.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Sixth Selection (Saturday, 4-5 p.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Seventh Selection (Sunday, 9-10 a.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Eighth Selection (Sunday, 10-11 a.m.) \_\_\_\_\_