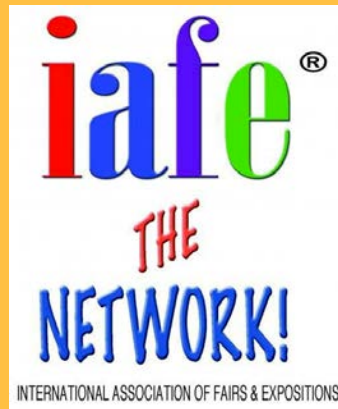




MAAF NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE
2026



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Spring is here! Looking back, we have completed so many fair related activities and already there are more on the calendar!

Thank you again to all the fairs who hosted and attended the You Make THE Difference meetings with Ian Hill. I look forward to your “Boosts” every week. I have been introduced to key Volunteers from Presque Isle to Acton. Met Youth who are truly making a difference in our Maine fairs. Learned a lot about the history of our fairs. Celebrated your generous sponsors and ended every week with a smile as I read about the fun activities happening on your fairgrounds.

Speaking of “Fun,” I think of our recent Zone 1 gathering in Pennsylvania. The food was delicious as we ate our way through some amazing Pennsylvania Dutch cooking. As we closed out our gathering, we participated in a “Red, White and Blue” celebration of America’s 250th birthday. Front and center in the celebration were our smiling and energetic

Maine YP members.

Mark your calendars to attend the 2026 IAFE Convention held this year in Louisville, Kentucky. November 29-December 3rd. Scholarships from the MAAF Foundation to attend this gathering will be available soon. Check the MAAF website for more information.

As I look across the pastures and orchards of our Maine farms, I think of the special recognition that is planned for 2026. During the Ag Trade Show luncheon, Commissioner Amanda Beal invited those present to participate in the celebration of the Year of the Woman Farmer in Maine. Maine ag fairs will kick off this celebration at the Springfield Fair, and I look forward to learning about the special woman farmer from each fair as I travel across the state this summer.

As I write this, our MAAF conference planning committee has begun to plan for the 2027 MAAF Conference. Thank you to all who filled out the end of conference survey last January. Your input helps to guide our planning. More information will be available in future issues.

See you at the fairs! Barry

UPCOMING FAIRS!



Springfield Fair
June 11 - June 14
thespringfieldfair.com



Pittston Fair
June 18 - June 21
pittstonfair.com



Monmouth Fair
June 24 - June 27
monmouthfair.com

2026 MAINE FAIR EVALUATORS ANNOUNCED

The Maine Department of Agriculture has recently released a list of potential agricultural fair evaluators for the 2026 fair season. They include Shawn Bugbee, Chad Caldwell, Karna Johnson, Ashley LaDuke, Heidi Palmer, Elizabeth Tarantino and Toby Whitman.



YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE FROM IAN HILL

"What a great way to kick off the year, amazing people from all across Maine - leaders with heart, heritage and an unwavering commitment to your community. You are Difference Makers!!" This is how we were introduced to the opportunity to commit to the You Make THE Difference program. Those who chose to attend one of six workshops across Maine were not disappointed. Thank you to the host fairs - Fryeburg, Acton,

Cumberland, Skowhegan, Bangor and Houlton. They all invited community members - fire service, Lions Club, Boy Scouts, etc - to attend along with fair folks - and even included associate members in the group.

The gatherings included opportunities to view the fairs represented through a different lens - one that asked all to look at who makes our fairs successful. As the meetings concluded, we learned about the importance of the daily "BOOST." We learned that on Monday we would BOOST a volunteer, on Tuesday a youth member, Wednesday we were asked to look back at the heritage of our fairs, Thursday was an opportunity to recognize a sponsor and Friday - Friday was Fun Friday where we shared some of the fun that happens at our fairs. Close to 20 Maine fairs attended one (or more) of these workshops, and the commitment to the process has been impressive. We have been introduced to a variety of individuals/organizations/programs across the state as the BOOSTS come through on our internet feeds. So many key members of our fair communities are now really being SEEN and appreciated for all they contribute to insuring the success of our fairs. Thank you for your time and effort in taking your fairs to a new level to insure that our 2026 fair season is extraordinary!!





NORTHEAST LIVESTOCK EXPOSITION "NELE"

**To Sign up for the
class below**

[Click Here!](#)

YEAR OF THE WOMAN FARMER IN THE STATE OF MAINE

2026 has been proclaimed as the Year of the Woman Farmer in Maine. This designation aligns with the United Nations designation of the International Year of Woman Farmers and led nationally by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. During the Maine Ag Commissioner's Luncheon at the January Ag Trade Show, Commissioner Amanda Beal shared that through 2026 Maine will highlight women farmers and agricultural leaders. "The Governor's proclamation is an opportunity to honor woman farmers, past and present, and future farmers, especially the young women entering agriculture, and further position Maine as a national leader in advancing opportunity and innovation in agriculture."

Each Maine agricultural fair is being encouraged to select a woman in agriculture from their geographic area to receive this recognition. A current photograph and brief bio will be displayed at each fair as the fair shares this special recognition for our women farmers. Each fair will determine how to additionally recognize their choice during the fair. Following the close of our fair season in October, the photographs and information from all 25 women will be gathered together and a large informational banner will be created. The intent is that this banner will be displayed at the 2027 Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs conference in Bangor at the Cross Center at the end of January. There will be additional opportunities to display this banner at agriculture related events throughout the coming year.

IAFE ZONE 1 - A PHOTO RECAP





Dr. Zach McFarlane



Dr. McFarlane will be teaching the Beef Judging Clinic at this year's Northeast Livestock Expo!

Dr. Zach McFarlane is an Assistant Professor and Beef Cattle Specialist for California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California. Raised in a cattle and rodeo family in California, he developed his passion for the beef industry working on ranches in the western U.S. He earned his Ph.D. in Ruminant Nutrition from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where his research focused on practical, low-input beef production systems. At Cal Poly, Dr. McFarlane teaches beef production courses and conducts applied research to improve efficiency and profitability for cattle producers, while mentoring students through hands-on programs like the Cal Poly Bull Test.

Learn.Ask.Do.

Hands-On learning from Ag Industry Leaders

**Beef Judging Clinic
May 16th @ 9:30 AM**

THE RICHARD CAVERLY MEMORIAL DAIRY FUND 2026 NOMINATION FORM

The Richard Caverly Memorial Dairy Fund (RCMDF) was created by friends and associates of Richard Caverly for the purpose of sponsoring an award in his honor. The award will be presented to an individual, age 18-30 (on Jan. 1st of the award year), who exemplifies the qualities Richard was known for -great cow sense, a deep love of dairy cattle breeding and husbandry, and a strong belief in the importance of training and guiding dairy youth, as they are the future of our industry. RCMDF may also support youth clinics to continue Richard's legacy of helping dairy youth, if funds allow. Deadline for receipt of nominations: July 1, 2026
Award presentation: National fall show in recipient's region.



MAAF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP

Representing their respective fairs, Ashley LaDuke (Springfield Fair), Mickenzee Prentiss (Skowhegan Fair), and Liza Graustein (Fryeburg Fair) attended the 2026 IAFE Young Professionals Zone 1 Meeting, where they proudly represented Maine's agricultural fairs. Connecting with peers from New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, and other regions, they were able to exchange ideas, gain fresh perspectives, and strengthen the network of young professionals dedicated to the success and growth of agricultural fairs. One of the highlights of the trip was visiting the Allentown Fairgrounds,

where they participated in a special "Taste of Allentown Farmers Market," sampling a wide variety of delicious offerings from local vendors. Their itinerary also included a visit to the Olley Valley Fairgrounds, where they were treated to a memorable Pennsylvania Dutch dinner, participated in an exciting auction, and joined in celebration of America's 250th birthday. Their efforts and enthusiasm paid off as they earned first place for the most colorful and decked out. On behalf of the MAAF Young Professionals Group, we would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the organizers and hosts for their kindness, hospitality, and for creating such a meaningful and unforgettable experience.



A NEW FEATURE FOR 2026: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF POULTRY

In keeping with our “MAAF Mission Statement,” we are “promoting agricultural education” by introducing our fair goers to the Wonderful World of Poultry. As you travel through our 25 member fairs this summer, there will be informational presentations, children’s activities, chats with lots of members of the poultry community (both birds and bird lovers) and , my favorite, food to sample.

In no particular order, we will introduce you to some “finger-lickin” chicken vendors -

LAURIE'S LUNCH

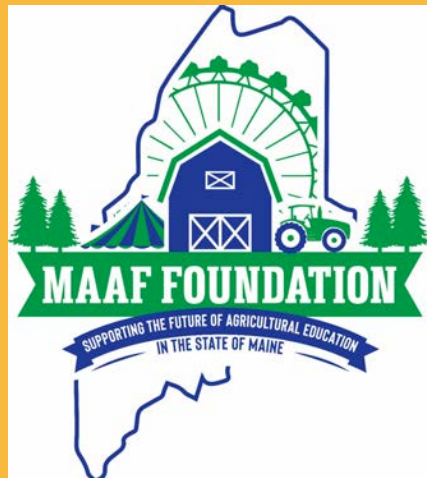
Home base is in Vassalboro, Maine. Operating out of 2 , sometimes 3, food trucks, Laurie’s is a favorite stop on many fair grounds throughout the summer. Make time to find her and her crew - you can’t miss her big, colorful food truck with the chickens inviting you to try the “fresh, boneless chicken baskets”. Found at the following fairs:

Fryeburg, Skowhegan and Windsor....and more...



GOALS GRANT APPLICATION FORM IAFE LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

[Application form](#) for the \$500 goals grant to apply for funds to attend IAFE Louisville at the end of November.



MAAF FOUNDATION NEWS

Seven (7) \$700 scholarships to the Zone 1 Convention held in April were awarded to representatives from: Skowhegan Fair, 2 from Cumberland Fair, Bangor State Fair, Windsor Fair, Springfield Fair, Fryeburg & Waterford Fair. Three (3) of these attendees are part of the YPI group.

A grant in the amount of \$2500 was given to the Northeast Livestock Expo for their May 2026 Event.

Six (6) applications were received for the 2026 Agricultural Education Grant. Applications were received and approved from: Blue Hill Fair, Waterford Fair, Union Fair, Cumberland Fair, Ossipee Valley Fair and Litchfield Fair.

Eleven (11) applications have been received for the 2026 High School Scholarship Program. The applications are currently being reviewed by the entire MAAF Foundation Board and the decision on number of \$2000 awards and recipients will be made at our next meeting.

LONG TERM VENDORS CELEBRATING OUR LONG TERM MAINE FAIR FOOD VENDORS

“From mouth watering sausages to ice cold sweet treats, traveling vendors serve up menus that are synonymous with county fairs. The business behind the booths is no easy task, and for many owners, success comes from a work ethic and a life of experience that is often underestimated or overlooked.” Many of our Maine food vendors are second and third generation family members, and this life style is what they have grown up doing. While some folks may refer to these business folks as “carnys”, one owner described himself as a “professional educated concessionaire”. The volume of business, long workdays and logistics coordinating ingredient deliveries and employees requires a lot of labor. Plus vendors often have to juggle the roles of manager, accountant, marketer, server, cook, mechanic, electrician, plumber, and more to cover whatever comes their way. Our Maine food vendors are a major reason that fairfolks come through our gates, and we are going to take a look at some of the vendors who have been serving us delicious fair food over many years.

STAN'S FRIES

Stanley J. McGray of Skowhegan, Maine, was a familiar figure in his hometown throughout his life. After graduating from school, Stan went to work at a local chicken farm.. From there, Stan first took over Bean’s Taxi in the early 1970s. Soon he owned two gas stations in the 1980s. In 1987 Stan began his biggest accomplishment, opening Stan’s French Fries. Doing this allowed Stan to travel to his favorite fairs, beginning with Bangor State Fair which was always his first stop. Annually Stan attended the Houlton Agricultural Fair, the Skowhegan State Fair, the Dover-Foxcroft Fair, Springfield Fair, Blue Hill Fair, Clinton Fair, New-Portland Fair, Farmington Fair and ending each year at the Fryeburg Fair.

Wherever Stan set up his truck , the line was soon to form. Comments heard in the line often included “No one makes fries like Stan” and “Don’t mind the line - it’s worth the wait!” Stan also was a proud member of the Skowhegan Lion Club and Skowhegan Elks Lodge. He was an extremely busy member of his community, and could be seen plowing snow in winter for local businesses and doing anything he could to help the community.

Toni Godin was more than his partner - she was his love, and together they raised her daughter, and later their grandson, Joey. Having his grandson working next to him was a relationship that grew through the years, built on love and mutual admiration for the business that they were continuing to build together.

Stan had many close friends in the community and across Maine. His generosity for those in need, as well as his friends, was well known throughout the fair community. His support often was given behind the scenes, and showed how much he cared for those who meant the most of him.

Stan passed away on Christmas Day, December 25, 2024, and a memorial service was held the following January at the Skowhegan Federated Church in Skowhegan. Those in attendance came from far and wide in Maine to pay their respects to a man who was an incredible person.



INFO FOR YOU - IAFE CONTEST DIVISION CHANGES

Read full article [here](#).

2026 MAAF AGRICULTURAL AWARD CONTEST "CREATING AN EXPERIENCE: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF POULTRY"

Category 1 - Agricultural Experiences designed for children and by children. These experiences will include information, demonstrations and appropriate hands on activities which introduce children to and educate them to the world of POULTRY. Domesticated birds raised for their meat, eggs or feathers - which includes chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, guinea fowl, pigeons, ostriches and pheasants. *Please indicate if your fair has a pre-existing hands-on ag education program designed for children.



Category 2 - Agricultural experiences for ALL fairgoers that educate fairgoers about poultry - identify them, how to raise them, creative recipes using poultry/eggs and many other activities. 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

MAAF AWARD Application:

A brief description of your events(s) and the connection to Maine agriculture. Specifically, the World of Poultry.

Who was involved in the planning/funding process? - i.e., individuals, community organizations, agencies, businesses, educators, youth, sponsors, etc. - and the roles they played.

What challenges did you face and how did you address them?

How did the public react to your event? - personal feedback, hits on your website, survey money results, photos of interactions during your event?

How was your event promoted? - print and social media, posters, school, local radio and promotional programs prior and during the event

REMEMBER - YOUR GOAL IS TO HELP FAIRGOERS IDENTIFY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CHICKEN AND A DUCK!!

Judging

*Each element will be evaluated on a scale of 1-5

1 = no evidence presented

2 = Minimal evidence of involvement presented

3 = Evidence of involvement presented

4 = Evidence of involvement is thorough and comprehensive

5 = Evidence of in-person community involvement during the fair dates - demonstrations, discussions/interviews, hands-on food preparation, availability of farmers/growers etc.

Applications may be submitted in digital form as well as traditional pen and paper.

Mail applications to: MAAF P.O. Box 3 Union, Maine 04862, 207-462-0856

Applications must be postmarked no later than October 31, 2026

FMI: Junia Norris

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

The **136th IAFE Convention** runs November 29-December 3 in Louisville, at the Kentucky International Convention Center.

NEWSLETTERS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

Junia Norris, MAAF Newsletter Editor
Rachel Andrews Damon, MAAF Newsletter Media

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