

Twilight Meeting at Atlas Farm – Corn Heat and Vegetable Production Systems

Date: Wed October 7.

Time: 4:00 pm-7:00 pm.

Atlas Farm, 8 Pine St., South Deerfield, MA 01373.

Hosted by Gideon Porth

Pesticide applicator recertification credits will be offered.

Refreshments will be available.

Sarah and Gideon Porth farm 40 acres in South Deerfield, MA. Atlas Farm started in 2004 and grows a wide diversity of certified organic vegetables, herbs, and flowers. They sell wholesale and at two farmers markets. Atlas farm recently installed a 165,000 btu Amaizing Heat biomass boiler in a new 35' x 144' ridge-vented greenhouse. The boiler is being run on locally grown corn, and provides heat for both a root zone radiant heating system in tomato troughs and a water to air heat exchanger. The system has worked well in greenhouse tomatoes. They plan to use the bottom heat for winter greens following the tomatoes.

The full program will include:

- **Corn Heat system in greenhouse tomatoes.** This meeting will showcase this innovative heating system and provide interested growers an opportunity to see the unit in use and ask questions of a grower who has been using this system successfully. This system was financed in part by an ongoing UMass Extension project, and we will be accepting new applications from growers who are interested in receiving cost share through this program.
- **Managing late blight in their organic potatoes and tomatoes.** Atlas farm managed to largely preserve their tomato crop this season until the end of August through the use of copper fungicides, and managed a decent potato harvest from an infected field using good cultural practices. A custom-designed sprayer with a drop nozzle system for staked tomatoes and timely management of the potato field was key in making this happen. We will use their first hand experience as the basis for discussion.
- **Equipment & production systems used on Atlas Farm.** We will look at fall lettuce and greens and a recently installed underground irrigation system that includes 5000 feet of underground water lines and numerous hydrants. Gideon has been building up the efficiency and effectiveness of tillage, cultivation, planting, and harvesting equipment systems so everything fits together. He will discuss his equipment choices and how they work.
- **Growing maxixe and okra.** Two Brazilian crops with good market potential.

Directions:

635 River Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342.

From I-91, take the exit for South Deerfield and go east on Rte 116. Before the bridge, turn north (left) on River road and go approximately 5.5 miles. The farm is on the left. Look for signs on where to park.

For pre-registration or more information contact Andy Cavanagh at 413-577-3976 or acavanagh@psis.umass.edu. Pre-registration is encouraged but walk-ins are welcome. There is no fee for attendance.