

Joint Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries

Bill Summary

Bill Number:	H.4106
Title:	An Act establishing a farm-to-institution pilot program
Sponsor:	Representative Davis of Great Barrington
Cosponsors:	Representatives Blais of Deerfield, Gaskey of Carver, Kearney of Scituate, and Paulino of Methuen; Senator Eldridge
Hearing Date:	Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 10:00 PM - 01:00 PM, B-1
Reporting Date:	Saturday, November 15th, 2025
Similar Matters:	None

Prior History

New file; No prior history

Current Law

Chapter 29 of the Massachusetts General Laws establishes the General Fund and many special funds.

Chapter 128 of the Massachusetts General Laws relates to agriculture.

Summary

This bill establishes the Massachusetts Farm-To-Institution Fund. The fund will be administered by the commissioner of the Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). Any money remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year will not revert to the general fund. The fund and the program will be administered for three years before it is repealed.

Expenditures from the fund will include, but are not limited to the implementation of the Massachusetts farm-to-institution pilot program, grants or reimbursements to institutions participating in the program to offset the cost of sourcing local food, technical assistance and grants to eligible local farms to support scaling up production or meeting institutional procurement standards, landscape analysis and strategic planning, and infrastructure improvements and capacity-building initiatives. The commissioner of MDAR is also directed to pursue additional funding from federal programs.

MDAR will report on activity of the fund no later than December 31st annually while the fund exists to the chairs of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Chairs of House and Senate Ways and Means, and the clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

This bill requires MDAR to establish and administer the Massachusetts farm-to-institution pilot program in coordination with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The program's objectives should include increasing the procurement of locally grown and produced agricultural products by institutions, supporting small and medium-sized farms within the Commonwealth, providing technical and financial assistance to institutions to facilitate local procurement, and promoting educational initiatives to increase awareness of local food systems.

The program will analyze already existing farm-to-institution programs in the Commonwealth, develop a scalable farm-to-institution model, provide grants, loans and technical assistance to farmers, food hubs and institutions. implement a pilot program, and establish a regional working group to assist in program implementation.

To develop the program, MDAR will develop guidelines for participation by local farms and institutions, establish a streamlined application process for interested stakeholders, and provide resources, including training and best practices, to participating institutional food service providers. The program will prioritize small and historically underserved farms. Institutions serving underserved communities will receive additional support to ensure equitable distribution of local foods.

This bill establishes a farm-to-institution advisory committee to guide program development and implementation. The committee will consist of the commissioner of the department or their designee, the secretary of the executive office of energy and environmental affairs or their designee 2 members appointed by the commissioner, 1 of whom shall be from a farm organization in the Commonwealth and 1 of whom shall be a local farmer from the Commonwealth, 2 members appointed by the commissioner and the secretary, who shall be from an institution participating in the program and 1 member appointed by the commissioner and the secretary, who shall be an expert in public health and nutrition. The commissioner and the secretary will serve as co-chairs.

This bill requires MDAR to prepare an annual report that will include the amount of locally sourced food procured through the program, economic impacts on participating farms, feedback from institutions participating in the program and any recommendations for program improvement and

potential statewide expansion of the program. The report will be submitted no later than December 31 of each year to the Governor, the chairs of the Joint Committee on Agriculture and the Clerks of the House of Representatives and Senate.