



## When farmers, brewers unite

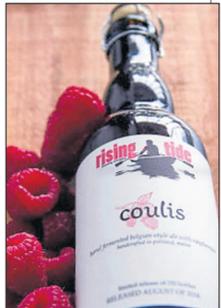
### Beer makers look for local fruit

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE  
BDN STAFF

During the ripe days of midsummer, crates of fresh-picked blueberries, strawberries and raspberries aren't just heading to the fruit stand or the freezer. These days, they're also headed for the fermenter.

From Rising Tide to Allagash Brewing Co. to Barreled Souls Brewing Co., Maine's artisan brewers are taking a cue from cider makers and reaching for local fruit. Farms like Doles Orchard in Limington and Goss Berry Farm in Mechanics Falls are happy to contribute to the growing intersection of the buy-local economy.

"We started working with local fruit in 2007. It adds different flavor components and aromas to our beers," Jason Perkins, brewmaster for Allagash in Portland, said. "If we decided to use frozen or extract flavors, we could make it any time of year and in large amounts. When working with local fresh fruit, you have to do it when fruit is picked."



COURTESY OF KAILEY PARTIN

A new release from Rising Tide Brewing Co. in Portland is made with raspberries from Dole Orchards in Limington.

When a large order comes in from Allagash, the Bunting family, owners of Doles Orchards, are ready. Beyond pies and jam they make with their berry bounty, Allagash's annual commitment is a boon.

"Allagash was looking for local cherries. Someone at [the University of] Maine Cooperative Extension recommended us, and the rest is history," said Emily Bunting, who helps her father Earl Bunting run the pick-your-own orchard.

Allagash works with a handful of fruit growers across the state to  
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## Small woodlot owners a force

### Tree demand shifts in changing market

BY JULIA BAYLY  
BDN STAFF

When Larry Guimond talks about his northern Maine woodlots, it's all about what he is leaving for future generations and what he has done to get to this point.

Guimond, 60, owns approximately 1,000 acres of timberland in Aroostook County, putting him on the high end of what is considered a "small" or "family" woodlot owner in the state.

"I started buying land when I was young," Guimond said. "I've been lucky. I can work the land myself. And for me it's not about how many trees I've cut or what kind of profit I see when I'm done [but] what the land looks like when I am finished on it."

According to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, nearly 90 per-  
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Farmer Bill Harris inspects the irrigation system keeping his acres of sweet corn alive during a severe drought in southern Maine.

## Fending off drought

### Dry season leaves crops parched and farmers worried

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE  
BDN STAFF

As the sun beats down on cornfields at Harris Farm, the constant "click, click, swoosh" of water pierces the air. To keep the acres of sweet corn fertile during a drought that's getting more drastic in southern Maine day by day, farmer Bill Harris has been irrigating for weeks.

"I've covered 12 acres three times to get it ready," he said.

It's midsummer, and the Dayton farmer should be blazing trails and mending bridges for his winter cross-country ski business, but the punishingly dry summer has left corn stocks parched. "Corn is king. It's what stops traffic," the 73-year-old, who has spent weeks watering his endless ears instead of relying on Mother Nature, said. Because he can't douse his entire 18 acres of corn, he's let some patches go. "If time is money, it's costing quite a lot."

Climatologists say the region from Portland south is suffering a moderate to severe drought, with no relief in sight. The trend of less than normal rainfall began in April and has not let up.

"In Portland from May 1 until now there have been 8.2 inches of rain, which yields a 31 percent deficit compared to norm," said Maine State Climatologist Sean Birkel, who predicts "the next three months will be warmer than normal."

John Rebar, executive director of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, is monitoring the situation across the state and said weather conditions are not yet dire.

"It depends on how long it lasts and how severe it is. Right now what we are seeing and hearing is water stress in southern



Sweet corn is in demand but southern Maine is experiencing a severe drought. This ear from Harris Farm was watered through irrigation.

Maine. They are not suffering in northern Maine," he said.

The drought has hit York and Cumberland counties hardest, with parts of Androscoggin and Sagadahoc affected. Meanwhile, northern Maine has seen above average precipitation this year. "Someone's pain is another person's pleasure," Rebar said.

Some farmers haven't seen conditions this scorched in a lifetime.

"It's the worst I've ever seen," John Fenderson, owner of Fenderson Farm in Saco, said. He is praying for rain. "Cucumbers [and] a lot of the vine crops are hurting. Some of the ears of corn are real, real small. You lose some stuff because it's so darn dry."

Farmers who don't have irrigation systems such as Fenderson are in the tightest spots. He waters with hoses and sprinklers, but that is not enough this year.

"I will survive, but it's a hard year. It's  
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## New head of Maine Farmland Trust sees opportunities

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS  
BDN STAFF

BELFAST — You could say that Amanda Beal, who was just announced as the new president and CEO of the Maine Farmland Trust, came by her interest in farming policy naturally.

Her family began operating a dairy farm in Litchfield when she was 2, and she recently has been involved in helping her father and brother transition ownership from one generation to the next. That change is working out well for her family, Beal said Tuesday. She now lives in Portland and is looking forward to helping other Maine farmers with their own transitions and challenges in her new role heading up the Belfast-based nonprofit organization.

"I come to this with a lifetime of experience and interest in agriculture," she said. "I feel very aligned with the work the Maine Farmland Trust has been doing and am excited to bring that work forward."

She will take over for outgoing CEO John Piotti, who is leaving to become president of the American Farmland Trust, a national group that does similar work as the Maine Farmland Trust.



COURTESY OF MAINE FARMLAND TRUST  
Amanda Beal, the new president and CEO of Maine Farmland Trust.

Beal has been working with the statewide organization since early 2015, most recently in the position of vice president of programs and policy. Before that, she served on the boards of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Eat Local Foods Coalition of Maine and Cultivating Community, a Portland-based nonprofit agency that operates community gardens and supports immigrants who farm. She also has entrepreneurial experience from when

"Some parts of the state we're definitely seeing some development pressure, and working to keep farmland into the future is definitely a critical need."

AMANDA BEAL

she managed a retail food store that included a lot of Maine food producers as vendors. When she talks about the opportunities present in local agriculture, she speaks with confidence.

"There's definitely an increasingly supportive consumer base for Maine farmers and people that are really interested in supporting local farms," she said. "Also people who are shopping in retail stores and asking for local foods to be present. It's continuing to grow this interest in knowing where our food is coming from, and we're attracting young farmers who want to be in Maine."

But real challenges remain. "We have to keep farmland as working farmland," she said. "It's clear that in some parts of the state we're definitely seeing some development pressure, and working to keep farmland into the future is definitely a critical need."

Other challenges include expanding farm production in a responsible way, making sure farm-

ers can earn a living wage and grappling with the impact of climate change.

"That's something I hear farmers talking about," she said. "My family has noticed some real changes on our farm. We have to learn how to farm in a changing world."

But if Maine agriculture continues to grow, the Pine Tree State could be an important piece in New England food production. Beal collaborated on a 2014 regional study that looked at the potential for the New England states to produce much more food than they do now.

"We found that we would be able to produce 50 percent of the food we eat if we scale up farmland from 2 million acres in production to 6 million," she said. "We have a fair amount of land in Maine that could be farmed, if we want to be a big piece of that scenario. There is opportunity here. Where the Maine Farmland Trust comes in is that we want to see farmers be part of that opportunity."