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Massachusetts Tomato Festival Draws 73 Entries

Farmers from Holliston, Granby and Sharon Take Top Honors in 24th Annual Event

BOSTON – Dozens of tomato farmers from around the Bay State converged on City Hall Plaza today to show off the fruits of their labors in the Commonwealth's 24th Annual Tomato Festival. A highlight of the kickoff celebration for Massachusetts Farmers' Markets Week, this year's festival drew 73 entries.

Top prizes went to Holliston's MacArthur Farm (Slicing), Granby's Red Fire Farm (Cherry) and Sharon's Ward's Berry Farm – which took home top honors in both the heirloom and heaviest tomato categories (full list of contest winners attached). Entries were judged by a panel of food writers, chefs, cookbook authors, grocers, state officials and gardening experts.

“Massachusetts is home to over 6,000 farms, supporting more than 518,000 acres of working landscapes. Farmers' markets play a vital role in keeping these farms productive and profitable. Along with pick-your-own farms and roadside stands, they help to make Massachusetts number one in New England in terms of direct sales of farm products to consumers,” said Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles, who began today's award ceremony by reading Gov. Deval Patrick's proclamation declaring August 17-23 as Massachusetts Farmers' Markets Week.

Pointing out that the purpose of the Tomato Festival is to boost consumer awareness about local agriculture, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner Doug Petersen added, “Farmers can spend up to ten hours a day preparing for and attending farmers' markets and some travel as far as 100 miles away. We are truly fortunate to be able to enjoy the fruits of their labors at markets like this one at City Hall Plaza.”

In addition to presentation of awards, today's Tomato Festival included tomato tasting, recipes, and information on nutrition and local farms. The festival and contest are sponsored by the DAR, New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association, and Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets, in cooperation with the City of Boston Property Management Department.

The list of this year's winners is attached.

Massachusetts Tomato Contest Winners, 2008

SLICING CATEGORY

Entry	Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
12	MacArthur Farm	Holliston	Caruso	1
14	Rose's Farm	Swansea	Early Goliath	2
10	Verrill Farm	Concord	Big Beef	3
6	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Fabulous	4
15	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Early Girl	5
1	Macone Farm	Concord	Scarlet Red	6
16	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Mountain Fresh	7
4	Cape Abilities Farm	Hyannis	Clarence	8
3	Cape Abilities Farm	Hyannis	Trust	9
8	E. Cecchi Farms	Feeding Hills	Christa	10

CHERRY CATEGORY

Entry	Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
5	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Sungold	1
6	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Supersweet 100	2
4	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Sun Sugar	3
3	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Black Cherry	4
1	Macone Farm	Concord	Sun Cherry	5
9	Verrill Farm	Concord	Sungold	6
2	Macone Farm	Concord	Sungold	7
8	Verrill Farm	Concord	Supersweet 100	8
18	Freitas Farm	Middleboro	Matt's Wild	9
14	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Sungold	10

HEIRLOOM CATEGORY

Entry	Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
15	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Green Zebra	1
11	Verrill Farm	Concord	Amana Orange	2
7	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Wapsipinnicon Peach	3
13	Clark Farm	Danvers	Striped German	4
10	Verrill Farm	Concord	Carbon	5
6	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Azoychka	6
14	MacArthur Farm	Holliston	Arkansas Traveller	7
5	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Black Prince	8
9	Verrill Farm	Concord	Black Prince	9
3	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Chocolate Stripes	10

HEAVIEST

Entry	Farm Name	Town	Variety	Weight	Place
7	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Striped German	3.23	1
3	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Giant Belgium	2.53	2
2	Volante Farm	Needham	Striped German	2.52	3
4	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Striped German	2.27	4
5	Verrill Farm	Concord	Super Steak	2.09	5
9	East Street Farm	Tewksbury	Yellow Brandywine	2.06	6
8	Wilson Farm	Lexington	Super Steak	1.83	7
1	Macone Farm	Concord	Macone Farm non-acid	1.82	8
6	Clark Farm	Danvers	Big Zak	1.79	9
10	Silverbrook Farm	S. Dartmouth	Pineapple	1.76	10

