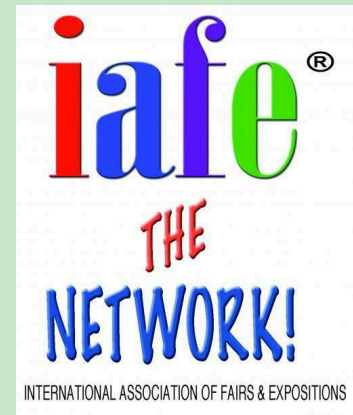




MAAF
NEWSLETTER
CONFERENCE
2026

SEE YOU
THERE!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It's an exciting time as we prepare for the **2026 Annual Conference**. We have moved the conference to the Cross Center in Bangor this year to accommodate the increased programs being offered. You're **conference** committee has been hard at work putting together a great program, which is part of this newsletter. We are very excited to have Ian Hill as our guest speaker and additionally he'll be conducting workshops as well. Joining us this year is David Grindle, IAFE President and CEO, please give him a warm Maine welcome when you see him. Please take the time and review the **conference** information and remember the **conference** is free. Hope to see you all there.
Barry



IAFE NEWS!
BARRY NORRIS AWARDED
STATE & PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

Press Release & photo above are courtesy of the IAFE - congratulations Barry!

NOTES FROM
DARCY WINSLOW
2026 MAAF CONFERENCE CHAIR

A NEW CHAPTER IN BANGOR

JANUARY 22-25, 2026

CROSS CENTER

Hey fair friends! We're switching things up this year and taking our Annual Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs **Conference** to Bangor's awesome Cross Center from January 22–25, 2026. If you've never been, it's a fantastic spot—perfect for all the learning, networking, and good times we have planned. Mark your calendars and get ready for a great time! Go to our conference info page on our **website** for all details.



Keynote Speaker: Ian Hill from The Changing Point

We're super excited to welcome Ian Hill from The Changing Point as our main speaker. Ian's talks are always packed with energy, and you'll walk away with plenty of fresh ideas to put to work at your fair. Don't miss him, he's one of the best!

What's Happening This Year?

- Thursday Welcome Reception: Kick off the **conference** with snacks, drinks, and a chance to catch up with familiar faces (and meet new ones!).
- Workshops & Sessions: We've lined up all sorts of sessions, marketing tips, safety, generational gaps, Fairs Helping Fairs, and more. No matter your role at the fair, you'll find something useful. Find the Schedule Here.
- Friday Night Entertainment will be Jesse and the Rhythm Rockets. They are an 80's Band. Come dressed up, there may be prizes for best 80 Era!!!
- Pre-Register to receive 2 drink tickets for Friday Night.
- Sign up for two off site opportunities. Go behind the Scenes at the Hollywood Slots Casino on Friday and Saturday (limited to 20) or head to Lougee and Fredericks Florist to arrange flowers for the **conference**. To sign up for either one send an email to mainefairs@gmail.com.

Trade Show: Tons of New Vendors!

Love checking out new stuff? Our trade show's bigger than ever, with lots of new vendors. Swing by, chat with folks, and find something for your next event!

Ready to Go? Pre-Register Now!

Don't wait—get yourself pre-registered so you don't miss out. Head to Registration and Banquet Tickets and you'll be set. Early birds get an easy check-in when you arrive. You will need to have your badge every day to get into the Cross Center so be sure to stop at the Registration Table. Registration will be open Thursday Night from 3pm to 7pm for your convenience.

Banquet Tickets Pricing Announcement

We are pleased to announce that the tickets for the upcoming **conference** banquet are being offered at a special rate of \$42.53 per ticket. The full price of each banquet ticket is \$59.00. Thanks to the generous support of MAAF, the difference in cost between the full price and the reduced rate is being covered on your behalf. This allows attendees to enjoy the banquet at a significantly discounted price. Please take advantage of this opportunity and secure your banquet ticket at the reduced rate. We look forward to seeing you at the event!

Send Us Your Best Pics or Bring a Display Fair Photos

Show Off Your Fair—photos are needed! We want to see what makes each fair special! Please let us know who to send the link to for uploading by emailing Mainefairs@gmail.com Get your photos in by January 10, 2026, so we can include them in the slideshow!

Fair Tables are available again this year.

This is very popular. Showcasing your fair is a fantastic opportunity to highlight the unique aspects of your fair. A well-organized table display can foster valuable connections and leave a lasting impression. Please let us know if you will need a space by emailing mainefairs@gmail.com.

Questions? Reach Out Anytime!

Whether you're a regular or showing up for the first time, we can't wait to welcome you to Bangor! If you have questions about registration or how to send photos, email us at mainefairs@gmail.com.

See you in January for a **conference** full of fun, learning, and fair friends!



REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thursday's welcoming **conference** reception is sponsored by the MAAF's YP (Young Professionals) group.

Please bring an item from your Fair for the MAAF auction!

The theme for 2025 is The Wonderful World of Poultry



UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

The **Zone 1 meeting** is April 9-11 in Breinigsville, PA which is near Allentown. More info can be found on the IAFE website. There are scholarships and grants to help those who wish to attend.



RECAP FROM THE IAFE 2025 CONFERENCE

Twenty-one fair members from Maine traveled to Denver, Colorado, to attend the IAFE Convention and Trade Show. Fairs represented included Blue Hill, Cumberland, Fryeburg, Harmony Free Fair, Litchfield, Skowhegan, Springfield, Union, Waterford World's Fair and Windsor. Blue Hill and Litchfield Fairs were recognized as winning their categories of small fairs, and Barry W. Norris was recognized by the IAFE as the State and Provincial Executive of the Year.

Highlights of the convention included a private screening of the "World Without Cows Documentary" brought by filmmakers Michelle Michael and Brandon Whitworth, a tour of the National Western Complex (Home of the National Western Stock Show), visiting with Johnnie Bubar (a longtime favorite entertainer at Maine fairs), and reconnecting with www.fairs.com - a vendor that offers an all-in-one platform that includes digital ticketing, professional websites and proven social media marketing.

Reflections on the convention experience include:

"It was great to have such a large contingent from Maine. It made an impression on the IAFE and other fairs and organizations throughout the world."

"Wonder how many other states had 40% of their member fairs there!"

"My first IAFE convention was an amazing experience. The sessions were informative, insightful and gave me so many more ideas! The overwhelming feeling was one of positivity, encouragement and collaboration. Where else can you find CEOs of giant organizations with ten day fairs chatting with volunteers from tiny 1 to 3 day fairs?..."

"I have been to several and I think that this one was very informative."

"I got to meet people from four different countries, listen to amazing guest speakers, learn some eye opening things to help grow even the smallest fairs."

"The IAFE convention provides a unique opportunity for me to interact with fairs of every size, complexity and culture. The session settings enabled comfortable conversations about shared challenges as well as success stories..."

"Regardless of the size of your fair, it would be hard to overstate the value of this conference given the networking opportunities and session options."

"At the IAFE convention in Denver, I had the opportunity to gain valuable insights into several key areas of the fair industry, including innovations in food and beverage, insurance considerations and best practices for managing crisis situations. The keynote speakers inspired the audience to think outside the box and challenge ourselves to find ways to not only uphold the heritage and history of Fairs as we see it today but to build new traditions for the next generation to uphold..."

"Regardless of the size of your fair, it would be hard to overstate the value of this conference given the networking opportunities and session options."

Please make a moment at the MAAF conference to read many of the passages in their entirety.

NOTE - Four Maine fair members attended through the generosity of the MAAF Foundation grants, as well as one individual receiving an additional grant from the IAFE. There are several other national grants written to enable people to attend other national conventions/conferences. More information will be available at the MAAF conference in January.



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2021-November/December

2022-January
2022-February
2022-March/April
2022-May/June
2022-July/August
2022-September/October
2022-November/December
2023-January
2023-March
2023-May
2023-July
2023-September
2023-November/December

2024-January/February
2024-March/April
2024 May/June
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