



**Massachusetts Food System Collaborative  
2022 State Representative and Senator Questionnaire**

**Your name:** Kevin Kalkut

**Office Sought, including district:** State Representative, 9th Norfolk District

**Website:** <https://www.kalkut4rep.com/>

**What are three of your priorities that reflect your commitment to a healthy food system for Massachusetts and your constituents?**

**Priority 1**

In our local district, I have partnered with local officials and the MAPC to outline a smart growth strategy that maintains our local open space and farmland while balancing the housing development goals. This is an ongoing effort that I will continue to prioritize at the State House.

**Priority 2**

Work with local organizations, such as MA Food Systems, to understand what I can do to help increase the number of HIP locations to ensure that healthy foods are locally accessible to those with SNAP benefits.

**Priority 3**

Increase organic waste/composting statewide.

**How would you support the Healthy Incentives Program?**

The Healthy Incentives Program is a great way to promote healthy food choices to SNAP beneficiaries and also a smart way to support local farmers and small businesses. I believe as a next phase to this program, it will be important to expand the network of farm stands, farmer's markets, CSAs, and mobile markets that accept SNAP benefits to ensure that all SNAP recipients have access to these services without spending additional time and resources on transportation services (train, gas, paying a friend to drive, etc.) to a HIP location. In addition, I believe this program may be more successful alongside education about the physical and psychological benefits of feeding our children fresh, healthy foods as a part of their daily food consumption. This education is equally important for parents and children.

**How would you support farmers in adapting to climate change?**

Climate change needs to be addressed to preserve the quality of life for all, including farmers. I fully support the environmental goals that have been set in Massachusetts that will minimize the changes to further deteriorate the ozone and decrease greenhouse gasses that lead to climate change. For many farmers, new technologies have been helpful in understanding the specifics of the lifecycle of the products and any potential issues that may be causing food waste and lowered profits. Given that the environment has changed so much over the years, this new technology should be helpful to determine the specific changes (soil, for example) and how to adapt for future success.

**How would you help to ensure that children understand where food comes from, the importance of healthy eating, and other essential food literacy issues?**

A recent report from the CDC states that students receive less than 8 hours of nutrition education per year and would benefit from 40-50 hours per year to affect behavioral change. While I believe the schools have been very successful in their efforts to offer balanced, healthy meals to students at school, the education hours should be improved to ensure that our children are able to understand how food choices impact their holistic health.

**What policies or investments would you support to protect farmland and increase farmland access?**

This is something that I have worked on for the past 2+ years in my local district, to balance maintaining the open space/farmland in our rural towns with the competing efforts to build new 40B and 40R developments that allow for affordable housing thresholds to be met. In our district, we partnered with the MAPC and local officials to create a smart growth plan that also meets the needs for affordable housing. Balancing the rural town elements, such as local farms and open space, with the need for affordable housing is a pillar of my campaign platform and something that I am looking forward to prioritizing at the State House.

**What strategies would you support to reduce food waste?**

Success stories such as Vermont's "Universal Recycling Law" are inspiring and should serve as case studies for other states, like ours, looking to reduce food waste statewide. According to stats provided by the Vermont Foodbank, in addition to reducing landfill waste, this new law has resulted in a 40% increase of food donations. I would look to these types of examples who are not only helping to achieve environmental goals, but also help those who are food-insecure as a result. In addition, I am in support of Bill S.954 that would provide tax credits to farmers who donate food to persons in need.

**How would you work to ensure that food system stakeholders of color - consumers, workers, farmers, landowners, and others - have equitable access to opportunities in all aspects of the food system?**

I support the bill in the Massachusetts legislature titled Bill S.502 which calls for a commission on agricultural equity by developing recommendations for supporting racially equitable investments, policies, and practices to promote equity in agriculture. For far too long, socially disadvantaged groups have been systematically excluded from, and had less resources and opportunities based on their identity. Within the commission proposed, the designation of

individuals advocating for representing socially disadvantaged groups is a common-sense solution that ensures this commission will be compromised by stakeholders most affected by the very historic discrepancies of opportunity this bill seeks to address. Moreover, I will ally with organizations within our district — and statewide — working to address the lack of equity throughout the food system.