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News Release

Release No.: 07-01-13

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USDA Announces Payments to Provide Relief for High Transportation Costs Faced by Alaskan Farmers, Ranchers and Growers

Palmer, Alaska, July 1, 2013 – Danny Consenstein, Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Alaska, announced that Alaskan growers, farmers and ranchers who experience high transportation costs are now receiving payments through funding authorized through the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill). USDA remains focused on carrying out its mission, despite a time of significant budget uncertainty. Today's announcement is one part of the Department's efforts to strengthen the rural economy.

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP) assists farmers and ranchers in Alaska, Hawaii, and other outlying areas.

"Alaska farmers make a big contribution to the economy, the health and the security of our communities. They provide jobs and healthy, local food for Alaskans. But our farmers face unique challenges. In addition to our northern climate, they experience high costs of fuel, equipment, materials, and fertilizer because of our location. The RTCP program helps level the playing field for our producers and provide more local food at competitive prices," said Consenstein.

"In 2009, when Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack visited Palmer, Bethel and Hooper Bay, he saw first-hand the challenges faced by Alaska producers. USDA is committed to developing new programs like this that fit the needs of Alaska producers. I also want to thank our congressional delegation for all of their work to support this program in Congress," noted Consenstein.

173 Alaskan agricultural producers will soon be receiving \$390,766 to help offset the high cost of farming in Alaska. Payments to individual producers range from \$70 to \$6,130.

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Producers across the state are receiving payments. Farmers, ranchers and growers from Craig, to Bethel, to Kodiak, and Manley Hot Springs are participating in the RTCP program. Some of the agricultural products they are producing include hay, vegetables, oysters, dairy products, grain, livestock and peonies. These payments are for expenses incurred in 2012.

For more information about this program, please visit your FSA county offices. In Palmer, contact Donna Kramer at: (907) 761-7753 or donna.kramer@ak.usda.gov.

In Delta, contact Lloyd Wilhelm at: (907) 895-4242, Ext. 102, or lloyd.wilhelm@ak.usda.gov, or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak>.

Applications and further information will be available online, or can be mailed or emailed to interested agricultural producers.

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