

October 2012



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Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

**Merrimack-Belknap-
Hillsborough County
FSA Office**

The Concord Center
10 Ferry Street
Box/Suite 212
Concord, NH 03301

Phone: 603-223-6003

Fax: 603-223-6030

www.fsa.usda.gov/NH

Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee Members

Charles Price, Chair
Martha Crete, Vice-Chair
William Hall Jr., Member
Eric Tenney, Member

LAA-1 REGULAR COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION AND LAA-3 MAKE-UP ELECTION

The FSA County Committee is the direct link between the farm community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. County Committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on the committees help decide the kind of programs their counties will offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

Watch your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot early next month for the Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1 regular election which includes Alton, Barnstead, Center Harbor, Gilford, Gilmanton, Laconia, Meredith, New Hampton, and Sanbornton. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on **November 5, 2012**. If for some reason you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office. Completed and signed ballots must be returned to the county office by close of business on **December 3, 2012**.

There will also be a make-up election to fill an open County Committee position for LAA-3 which includes Allenstown, Belmont, Bow, Canterbury, Chichester, Concord, Epsom, Hooksett, Loudon, Northfield, Pembroke, and Pittsfield. Nomination forms are available at the FSA office and online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>. Nominations from eligible producers should be filed by the **November 26, 2012** deadline at the local FSA office.

2013 REPORTING OF FALL SEEDED CROPS

All producers are reminded that the acreage reporting date for fall seeded crops has changed, beginning with the crop planted for 2013 harvest. The new acreage reporting date is **November 15, 2012**. This applies to all fall seeded crops including rye. Please call for an appointment to certify your crops.

The reporting deadline for **apple** and **peach** crops has also change to **January 15th**, and the reporting deadline for **honey** and **maple sap** is **February 15th**. Please contact your local county FSA office to report your crops and with any questions.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FSA IMPLEMENTS EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM FOR MERRIMACK COUNTY

A storm event on July 4, 2012 caused severe damage in parts of Merrimack County. Farms, including maple orchards, suffering severe damage may be eligible for financial assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the USDA Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County Farm Service Agency (FSA). ECP provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters.

Sign-up will be held from Monday, October 1 through Tuesday, October 30. Please contact the Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County Office if the storm damage sustained at your farm:

- will be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use;
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area;
- will affect the productive capacity of the farmland; and
- will impair or endanger the land.

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. No producer is eligible for more than \$200,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence. The following types of measures may be eligible:

- removing debris from farmland; and/or
- restoring and replacing maple sap taps and tubing

To be eligible for assistance, practices should generally not be started until all of the following are met:

- an application for cost-share assistance has been filed and has been approved by the Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County Committee (COC);
- COC or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area; and
- the Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the UNH Cooperative Extension County Forester, has made a needs determination required for rehabilitation.

For more information or to apply for the program, contact the Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Service Center at 603-223-6003.

USDA ANNOUNCES HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS AND RANCHERS CLAIMS PERIOD

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013. The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

To read Secretary Tom Vilsack's entire news release issued 9/24/12 click on the following link:
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2012/09/0309.xml&contentidonly=true>

2011 SURE SIGNUP

Signup for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) for crop losses incurred in 2011 begins October 22, 2012 and ends June 7, 2013. The program authorizes assistance to farmers and ranchers who suffered crop losses caused by natural disasters occurring through September 30, 2011. For more information on the SURE program, contact your local FSA county office <http://www.usda.gov/sure>

AFIDA

Any foreign person who acquires, transfers, or holds any interest, other than a security interest, in agricultural land in the United States is required to by law to report the transaction no later than 90 days after the date of the transaction. They must file Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) reports with the FSA county office that maintains reports for the county where the land is located. For AFIDA purposes, agricultural land is defined as any land used for farming, ranching or timber production, if the tracts total 10 acres or more. For more information, contact the FSA office near you or the USDA web site at <http://www.usda.gov>.

2012 DCP FINAL PAYMENTS

DCP payments for 2012 will be issued after Oct. 1, 2012. These payments will be deposited directly into participating producers' bank accounts.

If there are any unearned payments, Commodity Credit Corporation will automatically subtract those amounts from the October Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program payments.

NON-INSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP) DEADLINES

NAP is a program that helps producers reduce their risk of financial loss when natural disaster causes a loss. The deadline to sign-up for 2013 crop coverage for perennial crops is November 20, 2012. The deadline to sign-up for honey and maple sap is December 1, 2012. Please contact the FSA Office at 223-6003 to sign up or if you would like more information about NAP.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

Do you need more storage space for your hay crop? The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities.

For more information about FSFL visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

ELECTRONIC SERVICES AVAILABLE

If a producer has Internet access, program participants can access many services from home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

To participate in these services, you must meet all program eligibility requirements. Online services have stringent security measures to protect your private information.

To utilize electronic services a producer needs an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires an e-mail address and filling out an online registration form at www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/ followed by a visit to the county office for identity verification.

If you would like assistance establishing your account, just contact your local USDA Service Center.

County Farm Program Staff

Donna Juneau - County Executive Director
Program Technicians - Melinda Marston, Anne Helmers

NH Farm Loan Staff:

Keith Farrell - District Director and Acting Farm Loan Manager
Farm Loan Officers - Lorna Wakefield, Rebecca Davis, William Wilson,
Program Technician - Sandra Carter

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).