

March 2013



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Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Updates

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

Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Office

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County Committee Members:

Martha Crete, Chair

Eric Tenney, Vice-Chair

William Hall Jr., Member

Robert Potter Jr., Member

NH Farm Loan Officers:

Lorna Wakefield

Rebecca Davis

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Jane Presby of Concord! Jane has been elected to her first term on the Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County Committee. Jane will represent farmers in Local Administrative Area (LAA 3) including farmers in the towns of Allenstown, Belmont, Bow, Canterbury, Chichester, Concord, Epsom, Hooksett, Loudon, Northfield, Pembroke, and Pittsfield. FSA appreciates all of the voters who took the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works because of your participation.

FSA County Committee meetings are scheduled on a quarterly basis in accordance with the federal government fiscal year. The 2013 fiscal year began on October 1, 2012 and extends through September 30, 2013.

The Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough Quarterly County Committee meeting schedule for the remainder of fiscal year 2013 is as follows:

- April 17, 2013 at 10 am
- June 19, 2013 at 10 am
- August 21, 2013 at 10 am

Additional meetings may be scheduled on an as needed basis. County Committee meetings are held in the USDA Conference Room 211 located at 10 Ferry Street, Concord. The public is always welcome to attend County Committee meetings.

Reminder of New Acreage Reporting Deadlines for New Hampshire

William Wilson

**NH Farm Loan Program
Technician:**
Sandra Carter

The New Hampshire Farm Service Agency would like to remind producers of the new acreage reporting deadlines. New deadlines became effective July 1, 2012 and are as follows:

January 2

- Honey

January 15

- Apples
- Peaches
- Nectarines

February 15

- Maple Sap

May 31

- Ornamental Nursery

July 15

- Corn
- Fresh Market Sweet Corn
- Spring Forage Seeding
- All Other Crops

November 15

- Perennial Forage
- Fall Forage Seeding
- Fall-Seeded Small Grains

Late-filed reports will be accepted. From July 1, 2012, through September 15, 2013, late-filed fees will not be assessed for crops with final reporting dates that fall within that time frame.

For more information on acreage reporting and acreage reporting deadlines contact your local FSA Office. To find an FSA County Office or the USDA Service Center closest to you, click on the State Office link on the NH FSA website, www.fsa.usda.gov/nh, to access the county office locator.

Over the Counter Channel (OTCnet)

FSA/CCC is moving toward OTCnet, an electronic method for processing customer check payments. When a check is submitted for payment either in person or through the mail, the check will be converted into an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The funds will be debited from the producer's account, usually within 24 hours of receipt. Please see the U.S. Department of Treasury legal notices posted in the Service Center or visit the following U.S. Department of Treasury Internet site for detailed information.

<http://fms.treas.gov/otcnet/legal.html>

What is OTCnet?

OTCnet is a Web-based online application process for converting paper checks presented to FSA into electronic debits to the producer's bank account. It presents many benefits, such as reducing lost/misplaced checks and paper handling. This improves customer relations, speeds the check

clearing process, and reduces the potential for human error.

How will my check be handled?

The check will be scanned into the system and voided. The customer will not receive the check back from FSA. FSA will hold checks for up to 14 calendar days to ensure that the item was successfully processed, and then FSA will shred the check.

How quickly will funds be transferred from my account?

The transfer of funds from your account could occur within 24 hours. Therefore, you should be sure that you have sufficient funds in your account to process the transaction. If you do not have sufficient funds, we may initiate the transaction again.

How will this transaction appear on my account statement?

The transfer of funds will be reflected on your account statement. The transaction may be recorded in a different place on your statement than where your checks normally appear, such as under "other withdrawals" or "other transactions".

What are my rights if there is a problem with the transaction?

You have protections under Federal law for an unauthorized electronic fund transfer from your account. You should contact your financial institution immediately if you believe that the transaction reported on your account statement was not properly authorized or is otherwise incorrect.

45th CRP General Sign-Up

USDA will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the sign-up can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15 years).

Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

IRS 1099-G Changes

Calendar year 2012 brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS.

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

For calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who received payments from more than one county will only receive

one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties was \$600 or more.

The same changes will apply to those who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

DCP/ACRE Sign-up Continues

DCP and ACRE signups for the 2013 crops are on-going. The DCP sign-up period will end on Aug. 2, 2013; and the ACRE sign-up period will end on June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

Read more about DCP and ACRE or contact the FSA county office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

Actively Engaged

USDA has amended the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity must make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs when both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management;
- The total direct payments received by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

HWFRCP Ends March 25

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack reminds Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades that the filing period will close March 25, 2013.

USDA urges potential claimants to contact the Claims Administrator for information and mail their claim packages on or before 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 his or her application 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.

Claimants may register for a claims package by calling the telephone number below Monday through Friday 9

a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time or by downloading the forms from the website.

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.

Dates to Remember:

March 25 - Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers claims deadline

May 20-June 14 - CRP general sign-up

June 3 - ACRE sign-up deadline

Selected Interest Rates for March 2013:

Farm Operating Loans (including Microloans) — Direct 1.25%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.25%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%

Emergency Loans -- 2.25%

Farm Storage Facility Loans -- (7 years) 1.375%

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).