

May 2013



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## Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Updates

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May 2013

### 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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/NH)

**Office Hours:**  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Executive Director:**  
Donna Juneau  
[donna.juneau@nh.usda.gov](mailto:donna.juneau@nh.usda.gov)  
Phone: 603-223-6003

**Program Technicians:**  
Melinda Marston  
[melinda.marston@nh.usda.gov](mailto:melinda.marston@nh.usda.gov)

Anne Helmers  
[anne.helmerts@nh.usda.gov](mailto:anne.helmerts@nh.usda.gov)

**County Committee Members:**  
Martha Crete, Chair  
Eric Tenney, Vice-Chair  
William Hall Jr., Member

### Reminder of New Acreage Reporting Deadlines for New Hampshire Producers

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

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

Robert Potter Jr., Member  
Jane Presby, Member

**NH Acting Farm Loan  
Manager:**

Keith Farrell  
[keith.farrell@nh.usda.gov](mailto:keith.farrell@nh.usda.gov)  
Phone: 603-223-6003

**NH Farm Loan Officers:**

Lorna Wakefield  
Rebecca Davis  
William Wilson

**NH Farm Loan Program  
Technician:**

Sandra Carter

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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nh), to access the county office locator.

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## CRP Sign-Up Starts May 20th

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 program can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract which is 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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## FSA County Committee Elections: LAA 2 and LAA 4

The election of agricultural producers to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, large or small operation. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Upcoming COC elections will be taking place for two Local Administrative Areas: LAA 2 and LAA 4. Towns within LAA 2 include: Andover, Boscawen, Bradford, Danbury, Dunbarton, Franklin, Henniker, Hill, Hopkinton, Newbury, New London, Salisbury, Sutton, Tilton, Warner, Webster, and Wilmot. Towns included in LAA 4 are: Antrim, Bennington, Deering, Frankestown, Greenfield, Goffstown, Hancock, Hillsborough, Manchester, Mont Vernon, New Boston, Weare, and Windsor.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws and members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

## **Election Period**

June 17, 2013 – The nomination period begins.

Aug. 1, 2013 – This is the last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center.

Nov. 4, 2013 – Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 2, 2013 – Last day to return completed ballots to the USDA Service Center.

Jan. 1, 2014 – Newly elected county committee members take office.

## **Who Can Hold Office**

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the local administrative area (LAA) in which the person is a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services

## **Nominations**

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and [online](#).

Nomination forms for the 2013 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1, 2013.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

## **Who Can Vote**

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election – Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

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# **USDA Announces Farm Payments Scheduled to Resume**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Juan M. Garcia recently announced that farm payments, which had been temporarily suspended due to sequestration, are scheduled to resume May 8. This includes payments for the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC), the Noninsured Crop

Assistance Program (NAP), and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE).

“I’m pleased to announce that farmers and ranchers can expect to begin receiving their payments beginning today, May 8,” said Garcia. “We appreciate the producers’ patience during the delay. We’re working diligently to get these payments out as quickly as possible.”

On March 4, 2013, FSA began a temporary suspension of FSA program payments in order to assess the impact of sequestration and determine the least-disruptive process possible for carrying out required cuts. The Department will use the Secretary’s limited authority to transfer funds to avoid reducing these program payments.

Producers should be advised that program sign-up periods currently underway have the following enrollment deadlines: 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program – June 3rd; 2011 SURE – June 7; and the 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program – August 2nd. Producers should contact their local Farm Service Agency office as soon as possible for appointments to enroll in these programs before the deadlines.

USDA has made a concerted effort to deliver results for the American people, even as USDA implements sequestration – the across-the-board budget reductions mandated under terms of the Budget Control Act. USDA has already undertaken historic efforts since 2009 to save more than \$828 million in taxpayer funds through targeted, common-sense budget reductions. These reductions have put USDA in a better position to carry out its mission, while implementing sequester budget reductions in a fair manner that causes as little disruption as possible.

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## Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Online Data Tool for Public

The USDA Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Program Statistics query tool, known as REGStats, is the official new tool of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for making program application and participation rate data available to the public on the Internet.

The REGStats website provides summary information about the number of individuals and entities that apply for, and receive, federal assistance from four USDA agencies or mission areas – the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA).

The information available in REGStats includes the number of applicants and recipients, by fiscal year, for USDA programs available to agricultural producers and landowners, categorized by race, ethnicity, and gender. Summary totals may be obtained nationally, or by state and county for the 50 states, as well as the U.S.

territories.

Visit the online site: <http://www.regstats.usda.gov>

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**Selected Interest Rates for May 2013:**

Farm Operating Loans (including microloans) - Direct 1.375%

Farm Ownership Loans - Direct 3.50%

Emergency Loans - 2.375%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) - 1.250%

**Dates to Remember:**

May 20 - CRP Sign-up opens

June 14 - CRP Sign-up deadline

June 17 - COC nomination period opens

July 15 - Acreage Reporting Deadline for corn, fresh market sweet corn, spring forage seeding, other crops (excluding apples, peaches, nectarines, fall seeded and perennial forage)- see listing in article above

August 1 - COC nomination period closes

August 2 - DCP sign-up deadline

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).