

December 2013



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Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Updates

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
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 pm

County Executive Director:
Donna Juneau
donna.juneau@nh.usda.gov
603-223-6003

Program Technicians:

County Executive Director (CED) Comments

Happy Holidays to all of the producers we serve in Merrimack, Belknap, and Hillsborough Counties!

New County Committee Election Ballots to Be Mailed

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers on November 4 were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County committee elections must use a secret ballot so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot will be destroyed unopened.

New ballots will be mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots will indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places,

Melinda Marston
melinda.marston@nh.usda.gov

including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot and on the outside of the return envelope.

Anne Helmers
anne.helmers@nh.usda.gov

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Office or postmarked by January 17, 2014. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on December 31, 2013, will have their term extended to January 31, 2014.

NH Acting Farm Loan Manager:

Brian Kuper
brian.kuper@vt.usda.gov
603-223-6003

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

NH Farm Loan Officers:

Lorna Wakefield
Rebecca Davis
William Wilson

NH Farm Loan Program Technician:

Sandra Carter

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

County Committee Members:

Martha Crete, Chair
Eric Tenney, Vice-Chair
William Hall Jr., Member
Robert Potter Jr., Member
Jane Presby, Member

The candidates in this year's election are:

- Martha Crete of Highway View Farm in Boscawen is nominated in LAA 2, Merrimack County, to serve as a committee member.
- Eric Tenney of Tenney Farm in Antrim is nominated in LAA 4, Hillsborough County, to serve as a committee member.

Next County Committee Meeting:

Friday, January 24,
2014 at 10:00 AM - USDA
Conference Room 211

More information on county committees, such as the new 2013 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

Emergency Programs

The Merrimack, Belknap and Hillsborough County area experienced a severe wind storm on Sunday, November 24, 2013 that felled trees and caused damage throughout the region. If you experienced severe storm damage to private nonindustrial forest land or farmland, please remember that the USDA Farm Service Agency has two programs that may be available to assist producers with disaster related recovery.

- The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) provides funding to restore forestland damaged by natural disaster.
- The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers to rehabilitate farmland (including fencing) damaged by natural disasters.

One of the qualifications to be eligible for EFRP or ECP assistance is that the eligible damage must be so costly that Federal assistance is required to complete the practice. Meeting this qualification will differ from individual to individual but the minimum qualifying cost of restoration is generally \$1,000 per participant. The minimum qualifying cost may be adjusted based upon individual circumstances.

If you are a private nonindustrial forest land owner or operator or a farmland owner or operator that was impacted by this or any other severe storm event, please contact the FSA County Office for more information as soon as possible. We can be contacted 24 hours a day by leaving a voice mail message at 223-6003 or via email at MBHCountyFSA@nh.usda.gov or via fax at 223-6030.

2014 Crop Acreage Reporting

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that have a November 15, 2013, or December 15, 2013, reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. New Hampshire crops under this waiver include perennial forage, fall forage seeding, and fall-seeded small grains. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Merrimack, Belknap and Hillsborough Counties:

November 15, 2013 – Perennial Forage, Fall Forage Seeding, Fall-Seeded Small Grains

January 2, 2014 – Honey

January 15, 2014 - Apples, Peaches, Nectarines

February 15, 2014 - Maple Sap

May 31, 2014 – Ornamental Nursery

July 15, 2014 – Corn, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Spring Forage Seeding, All Other Crops

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Additionally, producers can purchase both NAP and RMA coverage for 2014 annual forage crops. Late file fees will be assessed for 2013 crops reported after September 15, 2013, and 2014 crops reported after January 15, 2014.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough County FSA Office 24 hours a day by sending us a fax, an e-mail, or leaving a voice mail message. Our office phone number is 223-6003; our fax number is 223-6030; and our office e-mail is MBHCountyFSA@nh.usda.gov

FSA Advises Producers to Anticipate Payment Reductions Due to Mandated Sequester

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reminding farmers and ranchers who participate in FSA programs to plan accordingly in FY2014 for automatic spending reductions known as sequestration. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) mandates that federal agencies implement automatic, annual reductions to discretionary and mandatory spending limits. For mandatory programs, the sequestration rate for FY2014 is 7.2%. Accordingly, FSA is implementing sequestration for the following programs:

- Dairy Indemnity Payment Program;
- Marketing Assistance Loans;

- Loan Deficiency Payments;
- Sugar Loans;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- Tobacco Transition Payment Program;
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments;
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program;
- 2011 and 2012 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program;
- Storage, handling; and Economic Adjustment Assistance for upland cotton

Conservation Reserve Program payments are specifically exempt by statute from sequestration, thus these payments will not be reduced.

These sequester percentages reflect current law estimates; however with the continuing budget uncertainty, Congress still may adjust the exact percentage reduction. Today's announcement intends to help producers plan for the impact of sequestration cuts in FY2014.

At this time, FSA is required to implement the sequester reductions. Due to the expiration of the Farm Bill on September 30, FSA does not have the flexibility to cover these payment reductions in the same manner as in FY13. FSA will provide notification as early as practicable on the specific payment reductions.

For information about FSA programs, visit your county USDA Service Center or go to www.fsa.usda.gov/.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) 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. Additional security is required for poured-cement open-bunker silos, renewable biomass facilities, cold storage facilities, hay barns and for all loans exceeding \$50,000. 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 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.

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, dry beans and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities
- Honey

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

Special Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or

hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

Controlled Substances

Program participants convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for program payments and benefits.

If convicted of one of these offenses, the program participant shall be ineligible during that crop year and the four succeeding crop years for Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible for any or all program payments and benefits:

- For up to 5 years after the first conviction
- For up to 10 years after the second conviction
- Permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants convicted of federal or state offense for the possession of a controlled substance shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits as follows:

- Up to one year upon the first conviction
- Up to five years after a second or subsequent conviction.

Selected Interest Rates for December 2013:

Farm Operating Loans (including microloans)-Direct 1.875%
Farm Ownership Loans- Direct 4.125%
Farm Ownership – Direct, Joint Financing – 5.00%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50 %
Emergency Loans- Amount of Actual Loss - 2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) - 2.000%

Dates to Remember:

December 20, 2013 – Corrected Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters
December 25, 2013 – Christmas Holiday (Office Closed)
January 1, 2014 – New Year's Day Holiday (Office Closed)
January 2, 2014 – Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline for 2014 Honey
January 15, 2014 - Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline for 2014 Apples, Peaches, Nectarines
January 17, 2014 – Last Day to Return Corrected Voted Ballots to the USDA Service Center
January 20, 2014 – Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Holiday (Office Closed)
January 24, 2014 - County Committee Meeting
February 15, 2014 – Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline for 2014 Maple Sap
February 18, 2014 – Newly Elected County Committee Members Take Office

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).