



NEWSLETTER



October 25, 2011

MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY VILSACK

Hunterdon/ Somerset County FSA Office

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Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 am-4:30 pm

County Staff

Doreen Beruck-CED
Virginia Brophy-SFLO
Elizabeth Banko-PT
Laura LaFevre-PT

County Committee

Robert Fulper
Frank Hahola
Gerald Lyness
John Yablonosky
Cynthia Niciecki
(*Minority Advisor*)

The County Committee meets the third (3rd) Thursday of the month at 8:30 AM. Since meetings are subject to change, please contact the office if you are planning to attend.

The official newspapers are the Hunterdon Democrat and The Courier.

Some recent news stories have focused on suspicions and rumors about the Obama administration's work on agriculture. The truth is that the President, EPA Administrator Jackson, and I are listening to farmers, ranchers, and producers so that we can be the best possible partner for successful operations. These efforts are helping farmers enjoy some of the best incomes they have seen in decades.

Sadly, rumors and misconceptions have become the norm, not the exception, especially when it comes to regulations and how they might affect our nation's producers. First, it was that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was considering treating spilled milk like an oil spill. Not true. In terms of water regulations, EPA has made it clear that recent rules do not seek to regulate land that occasionally ponds during heavy rains.

Regulation of farm dust is another frequently repeated myth, based on a congressionally-mandated review that the EPA has conducted every five (5) years for decades. We all know you cannot farm without dust. EPA has no plans to propose stricter standards.

The Department of Transportation announced that it has no intention of proposing any new regulations or rules on the transport of agricultural products, farm machinery, or farm supplies to or from a farm.

Perhaps more importantly, the Obama Administration has worked to be the most accessible and collaborative in history. The President and I are listening to farmers, ranchers, and other producers and actively collaborating across the federal government to help everyone understand the facts of American agriculture.

I maintain a regular dialogue with Lisa Jackson at EPA and we even visited farms in Iowa together. The collaborative partnership we enjoy is reflected in our policies; pursuing common-sense standards that will give farmers a seat at the table and let them make the decisions they feel are best for their operations.

One (1) result of this sort of collaboration is that in 2009 and 2010, the federal government issued fewer new rules than it did in 2007 and 2008. As you hear from producers about their concerns, I know you will continue to be helpful in providing them with the information they need to help their operations succeed, and not to get caught up in rumor or exaggeration. You should urge folks with additional questions to contact the EPA directly, where they should be able to get further help in separating fact from fiction.

EPA and USDA understand that if we are going to solve the major environmental challenges of our time—combating climate change, reducing soil erosion, and ensuring an ample supply of clean water and healthy food for our families—farmers must help lead the way.

FSA SPOUSAL SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the office by either spouse. There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

EMERGENCY FARM LOANS

FSA provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine. Emergency loan funds may be used to: restore or replace essential property; pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; pay essential family living expenses; re-organize the farming operation; and refinance certain debts.

For more information and an application, please contact Virginia Brophy at (908) 852-2576 ext 110.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS



Eligible voters in Local Administrative Areas (LAA's) 1 and 2 consisting of Alexandria, Holland, Kingwood, Bethlehem, Clinton, Franklin, Lebanon, and Union Townships, in Hunterdon County will receive ballots in early November. The eligible nominees are Frank Hahola for LAA #1 and Scott Hender and Bernard Beatty for LAA #2. Ballots will need to be received by December 5, 2011 to be considered. If you do not receive a ballot and reside in the townships identified, please contact the office.

SURE SIGNUP

Sign up for the 2010 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program will begin on November 14, 2011. SURE 2010 is for those who suffered crop production losses during the 2010 crop year.

SURE provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or crop quality losses. The program takes into consideration crop losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to sixty (60) percent of the difference between the SURE farm guarantee and total farm revenue. The farm guarantee is based on the amount of crop insurance and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on the farm. Total farm revenue takes into account the actual value of production on the farm as well as insurance indemnities and certain farm program payments.

Producers with a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary must have suffered at least a ten (10) percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. Producers must have met the risk management purchase requirement by

either having obtained a policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, for all economically significant crops. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

If there is no Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may also be eligible for SURE if the actual production on the farm is less than fifty (50) percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. For SURE, a farm is defined as all crops in which a producer had an interest nationwide.

For more information on the SURE program, please contact the office.

NON-INSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when a low yield, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters. The sign-up for the 2012 crop year is currently underway.

NAP application deadlines vary according to the crop being covered. Producers should apply for NAP coverage using form CCC-471, Application for Coverage. Related service fees are due when the application is filed, and the service fee **MUST** be filed by the crop's sales closing date. The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county.

The fee cannot exceed \$1,875 per producer for individuals with farming interests in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver for service fees. To qualify for coverage, a producer must share in the risk of producing an eligible crop.



NAP sales closing dates are:

November 20: apricots, blueberries, cane berries, cherries, grapes, honey, onions, pears, plums

December 31: asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, greens, herbs, horseradish, leeks, lettuce, peas, potatoes, radishes, turnips

March 15: beans, brussel sprouts, cantaloupe, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, honeydew, peppers, pumpkins, sorghum (Somerset County only), squash, sunflowers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, watermelons

FARM LOAN PROGRAM LIMITS

FSA is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you have had a setback and your lender is reluctant to renew your loan.

Farm ownership or operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000 starting on October 1, 2011. This makes the maximum combination of direct and guaranteed loan indebtedness \$1,514,000.

The one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans has increased from 1 percent to 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan, for loans obligated after October 1, 2011.

For more information, please contact Virginia Brophy at (908) 852-2576 extension 110.

NRCS PROGRAMS

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to restore, enhance, or protect wetlands on their property.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) is a voluntary program only available in sixteen (16) states. In New Jersey, the program specifically targets beginning and limited resource farmers, small farmers, and producers who have limited participation in other USDA financial assistance programs.

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for improving or developing fish and wildlife habitat on private lands. The program provides both technical and financial assistance to establish and enhance habitat for priority species and habitat types.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program for persons who are engaged in livestock, forestry, or agricultural production, including organic production. Under a new provision of the 2008 Farm Bill, EQIP offers financial assistance for farmers interested in obtaining the services of certified professionals who can develop resource specific

Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) for their eligible agricultural land.

The application period for WRP, AMA, WHIP, and EQIP runs through **December 31, 2011**. Please contact NRCS or visit www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov for more information.

FARM RECONSTITUTIONS

In program terminology, farms are constituted to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one (1) farm serial number (FSN). When changes in ownership or operator take place, a farm reconstitution may be necessary. The reconstitution (recon) is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are different methods used when completing a farm recon:

***Estate Method**—the division of bases for a parent farm among the heirs settling an estate

***Designation by Landowner Method**—divides base in a manner agreed to by the parent farm owner and the purchaser or transferee. The Landowner Method can be used when: part of the farm is sold or ownership is transferred; an entire farm is sold to two (2) or more persons; farm ownership is transferred to two (2) or more persons; a tract is sold to two (2) or more persons; tract ownership is transferred to two (2) or more persons. The land sold or transferred must have been owned for at least three (3) years, unless a waiver is granted, and the owner of the parent farm and the purchaser or transferee shall file a signed memorandum of understanding designating base before the farm is reconstituted, and any subsequent transfer of ownership.

***DCP Cropland Method**—the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract

***Default Method**—the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

2012 DIRECT AND COUNTER CYCLICAL PROGRAM (DCP)

Enrollment for the 2012 Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) will begin on **January 23, 2012 and continue through June 1, 2012**. For the 2012 program, there will be NO advance DCP payments. Eligible producers will receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices.

Hunterdon/Somerset
Farm Service Agency
687 Pittstown Rd, Ste 2
Frenchtown, NJ 08825



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DATES TO REMEMBER:

November 14th: 2010 SURE sign-up begins

November 20th: NAP sales closing date for apricots, blueberries, cane berries, cherries, grapes, honey, onions, pears, plums/ Crop Insurance sales closing date for peaches and apples

December 5th: last day for eligible voters in LAA #1 and LAA #2 to return their ballots

December 31st: NAP sales closing date for asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, greens, herbs, horseradish, leeks, lettuce, peas, potatoes, radishes, turnips

January 23rd: 2012 DCP sign-up begins

Continuous: CREP, continuous CRP, SAFE, FSFL

HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

- Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process, please visit: www.farmersclaims.gov call 1-800-508-4429
- Pigford—The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation, please visit: www.blackfarmerscase.com or call 1-866-950-5547
- Keepseagle-The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement, please visit: www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistance Secretary of Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, 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). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”