



FSA Administrator Meets with Area State Executive Directors



FSA Administrator Teresa Lasseter (center) with State Executive Directors Robb Thomson from New Hampshire, Sandra Adams from Massachusetts, Dave Lavway from Maine and Brymer Humphreys from New York

State Executive Directors from New England had the opportunity recently to meet with Administrator Teresa Lasseter at a meeting in Syracuse, New York. Administrator Lasseter has been on a heavy travel schedule since she assumed her position with the Farm Service Agency last fall. She has been meeting with state committees, employees and commodity groups across the country to listen to concerns and solicit opinions on how we can improve the agency's service to American agricultural producers. While in New York, one of the main topics discussed involved the upcoming state infrastructure reviews. For additional information on Administrator Lasseter's recent activities on behalf of the Farm Service Agency, check out the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Risk Management Agency Ag Professionals Meeting

On January 19, 2006, approximately 50 agricultural professionals from many agencies gathered together to better understand their role in the event of an emergency. The group included representatives from UNH Cooperative Extension, NH Department of Agriculture, Market and Food, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, NH Farm Bureau Federation, White Mountain National Forest, USDA Rural Development, and US Senator John Sununu.

We were fortunate to have Sheryl Maddux, Acting Director of USDA Homeland Security with us speaking on USDA's Food and Agriculture Security Efforts in the Context of the National Response Plan. Sean Goodwin from the State Emergency Management Office, James Gallons, USDA Risk Management Agency, Dr. Mark Prescott, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Dr. Stephen Crawford, NH State Veterinarian, and Thomas Durkis, NH State Entomologist were also speakers, providing information on their agencies' emergency response activities.

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Acting Director of USDA Homeland Security Sheryl Maddux addressing the group

County Committees

FSA County Committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. Farmers who serve on committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs their counties offer. Each year, eligible voters elect members of their communities to represent them. Congratulations to newly elected members:

Eric Tenney Hillsborough County
Sheila Stone Cheshire-Sullivan Counties

We'd like to express our appreciation to outgoing members for their service to FSA. For nine years, Sylvia Clark was a valuable member of the Cheshire-Sullivan County Committee. Diane Chauncey lent her expertise to the Hillsborough County Committee for ten years.

Farmers
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Employee News



Jessica DeSantis
Program Technician

Jessica DeSantis says she is thoroughly enjoying her work and helping others as a Temporary Program Technician in our Merrimack-Belknap County Office. Prior to coming to FSA, she was in the banking and

loan industry for over seven years. Jessica is a native of Salem, NH, but now lives in Concord with her husband Tim and their sixteen month old son Wesley. She takes pleasure in outdoor activities, doing crafts and spending time with her growing family, which will include a new member in September. We're happy to have Jessica join FSA.

New England NASS Director Appointed



New England NASS Director Gary Keough
at the NH Farm and Forest Exposition

Gary Keough has recently been appointed the Agricultural Statistics Director for the New England Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Gary was born in the rural community of Darlington, Wisconsin. In 1980, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a B.S. in Agricultural Education and later received an M.A. in Statistics at the University of Missouri. Gary has been with the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for more 25 years. His varied positions with NASS have taken him to vastly diverse climates, including Puerto Rico. While there, he worked on the 2002 Census of Agriculture and as an advisor to improve Puerto Rico's agricultural statistics program. Gary has also taught survey methodology and estimation procedures at workshops in Pakistan, Mexico and Nicaragua.

Gary replaces longtime Agricultural Statistics Director Aubrey Davis who retired in January of this year.

2006 National Farm Loan Program Policy Meeting

FSA farm loan employees from across the nation attended the 2006 farm loan policy meeting, held in Reno, NV, March 14th through 17th. FSA leadership was well represented at the event.

Carolyn Cooksie, Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs opened the meeting, and set the tone for the week by highlighting the importance FSA farm lending plays in the nation's agricultural landscape, and the challenges we face together with our borrowers and producers to maintain profitability. Teresa Lasseter, newly appointed agency Administrator, greeted attendees and discussed her extensive FSA background, demonstrating commitment to helping FSA employees meet the needs of the borrowers and producers we serve. Steven Connelly, Deputy Administrator for Field Operations followed Ms Lasseter with his thanks for continuing exceptional service to our agricultural producers and borrowers.

A particular highlight of the meeting was a presentation on current efforts to enhance FLP Direct loan operations. The project is known as "FLP Streamlining", which simplifies and reorganizes regulations and handbooks, and updates forms associated with Direct Loans. Dozens of forms and documents will be eliminated, the loan making and servicing processes will be more efficient, and redundant procedures will be eliminated. This is the first major initiative to improve direct loan regulations and documents in 60 years. An FSA Fact Sheet on

this, and other FSA programs, can be found at the following website:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/factsheetbyfreeform.asp>

Other significant issues discussed at the conference included the quickly expanding use of GIS within the agency, and in particular, in farm lending efforts. Issues of emphasis relating to loan programs for beginner farmers, small farmers and socially disadvantaged applicants were highlighted. Also covered were updates and enhancements to the Farm Business Plan programs and implementation of a Farm Loan Programs Risk Assessment.

ESRI – Federal User Conference

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) held the 5th annual Federal User Conference in Washington, DC from January 31st – February 2nd. ESRI, a leader in their industry, provides



Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. The conference was developed to provide a way for federal GIS users to network and share information, as well as an opportunity for ESRI to share the latest software releases. This year's conference was attended by Marilyn Norton. Marilyn spent the three days in DC attending seminars whose topics ranged from Emergency Management and Disaster Response to File Management and Programming.

Emergency Conservation Program



Most of New Hampshire experienced record breaking rainfall in the fall of 2005. The most severely affected area was in southwestern corner of the state. Cheshire and Sullivan Counties received over ten inches of rain between October 7 and October 9, 2005. As a result of flash flooding, waterways overflowed their banks depositing large amounts of sediment and debris on cropland, creating large gullies, and destroying fences. The Cheshire-Sullivan County FSA Committee requested financial assistance to aid landowners in returning the land to productive agricultural use. With NH FSA State Committee concurrence, an application for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) funds was submitted. \$405,000 has just been awarded to the two counties, so the necessary work can be done.



New Hampshire Farm Service Agency
 22 Bridge Street, 4th Floor, Unit 13
 Concord, NH 03301

New Hampshire FSA News is published by:

USDA-NH Farm Service Agency
 22 Bridge Street, 4th Floor
 Concord, NH 03301
 Telephone: 603-224-7941
 FAX: 603-225-1410

Robb Thomson, State Executive Director
 Linda Grames, Administrative Officer/Program Specialist
 Ken Gustin, District Director
 Marilyn Norton, Program Specialist-GIS/Compliance
 Mary Nichols, Farm Program Support Specialist
 Lori Kennepohl, Administrative Technician

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue.



**Program Specialist Marilyn Norton and
 CED Kathy Dole share a light hearted moment
 while working at the Farm and Forest Exposition**

2006 Farm and Forest Exposition

February 3rd and 4th brought yet another successful year of participation in New Hampshire's Farm and Forest Exposition for the NH Farm Service Agency. FSA has participated in the Expo for over ten years now. Each Expo gives FSA the opportunity to reconnect with other New Hampshire organizations and farmers, and make many new connections.

This year's booth provided the public with general information on FSA's programs and spot-lighted Global Positioning Systems (GPS). The FSA vision statement,

"A customer-driven agency with a diverse and multi-talented work force, dedicated to achieving an economically and environmentally sound future for American Agriculture", was used as this years FARMO fact and supported the Expo's theme, "Find Your Rural Character". FSA participates in FARMO each year. FARMO, a bingo like game, gets kids involved and asking questions at each participating booth.

For more information on the Farm and Forest Exposition visit their website at: www.nhfarmandforestexpo.org/

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