



August 2012

From the Desk of the State Director:

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Maine State FSA Office

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Hours

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

Maine FSA Staff

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Maine State Committee

Annie Allen, Chair
Anthony Carroll
Jackie Lundeen
Sandra Nutting
Ralph Turner

Maine was fortunate this past week to have had two visitors from the Secretary of Agriculture's office in Washington DC visit us here in Maine. Brandon Willis, Special Advisor to the Secretary and Charles (Chuck) Lippstreu, speech writer for the Secretary came to Maine on their own time and dime to check out our diversity in agriculture.

On Friday, Brandon and I traveled to G.M. Allen and Sons Inc. for a tour of their blueberry harvest and processing facility. State Committee Chair Annie Allen and her father, Kermit Allen, hosted us during our visit. Brandon had a chance to visit and ask many questions about the farm and their operation prior to sampling some fresh wild blueberries right in the field. Knowing Brandon's love of blueberry pie I can honestly say he loved it.



L to R: Anne Langston, Sebastian Bell, Brandon Willis & Chuck Lippstreu

On Saturday, Brandon, Chuck and I travelled to the Damariscotta River where we met up with Andy Stevenson of Mook Seafood, Dana Morse of the Sea Grant College/Extension, Anne Langston Associate Director of the Aquaculture Research Institute at the University of Maine and Sebastian Bell, Executive

Director of the Maine Aquaculture Association.

Andy was kind enough to take us on a tour of his hatchery facility and of Mook's oyster cages on the Damariscotta River. The day was perfect and the knowledge shared with Brandon, Chuck and I was enormous. Between Andy, Dana, Anne and Sebastian every aspect of the industry was covered. The correlation between land farming and sea farming was quite evident by the end of the tour as was the huge potential available for future job and economic growth here in Maine.



Brandon Willis

Brandon, Chuck and I all had our first fresh oyster on a half shell. I was pleasantly surprised at how delicious they are!!



L to R: Chuck Lippstreu & Ralph Turner

We all travelled from there to Freeport to visit with State Committee Member Ralph Turner at Laughing Stock Farm. Ralph provided us with a tour of their farm and talked about some of the challenges facing farm families here in Maine and across the country. He shared his knowledge of the biofuel industry and the some struggles that are going on with changes in the biofuel markets at this time.

On Sunday, I sent Brandon and Chuck off on a course that took them Down East to Quoddy Head light and back to Bangor. On their way they passed through the blueberry barrens and of course a stop at a famous restaurant in Machias for blueberry pie. They tried to save the lobster business while here in the state by consuming a full years quota of lobster in two and half days!!

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. 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.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

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



Peoples Garden News:

Spotlight on Somerset County

The employees in Somerset County have been very busy this year planting their People's Garden. CED Elaine Moceus and staff have planted a number of vegetables in their cement window boxes and large pots. Varieties include the Abraham Lincoln tomatoes, green peppers, and greens. So far this year they have donated 6 pounds of greens to the local men's shelter in Skowhegan. They are just about ready to harvest their green peppers.



In conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture celebrating its 150th anniversary on May 15 throughout 2012 the People's Garden Initiative sent out one seed packet of tomatoes to all the registered People's Gardens in the country.



The 'Abraham Lincoln' seed is an indeterminate, heirloom variety of tomato introduced in 1923 by the W.H. Buckbee seed company of Rockford, Illinois, which named the tomato in honor of Illinois' Greatest Son. It was released without much fanfare, but over the years it proved itself to be one of the great tomato classics that survived the shift to hybrids during the 1940's.

Beginning and Limited Resource Loans

FSA has a program to assist beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years

Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm

Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA.

Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed.

Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at the local USDA Service Center or visit www.fsa.usda.gov and www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged groups.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Selected Interest Rates for July 2012	
Farm Operating - Direct	1.25
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.00
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50
Emergency	4.50
Farm Storage Facility—7 Year	1.125
Farm Storage Facility—10 Year	1.625
Farm Storage Facility—12 Year	1.875
9 Month Commodity Loan	1.250

Summary of FLP Activity for FY 12

107	Direct Operating Loans	\$ 5,565,630
1	Direct Operating Loans Pending	\$ 35,000
8	Guaranteed Operating Loans	\$ 642,266
8	Direct Farm Ownership	\$ 1,579,600
3	Direct Farm Ownership Pending	\$ 662,000
10	Guaranteed Farm Ownership	\$ 4,665,142
133	Total Loans	\$ 12,452,638

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 20250-9410, 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).

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 to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:

www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429

Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:

www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle – The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:

www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506

Disaster Assistance

The Farm Service Agency would like to remind crop and livestock producers that have recently experienced severe damage from flooding, wildfires and tornadoes that FSA programs are available to assist with recovery.

We encourage all who have suffered a disaster due to the recent severe weather conditions to read the fact sheets and visit their local FSA county office so they get a quick start in the recovery process.

Crop Reporting Dates	
Barley, Corn Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Green Peas, Oats, Potatoes, Spring Wheat, and all other crops	July 15, 2012
Forage Seeding	August 15, 2012
Perennial Forage, Fall-Seeded Small Grains	December 15, 2012
Apples, Blueberries	January 15, 2013

Producers Must Report Crop Losses to FSA

Producers must report crop losses resulting from a weather-related disaster event within 15 days of the disaster or when the loss first becomes apparent, this includes crops covered by crop insurance, the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crops without insurance coverage. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Crop losses are acres that were timely planted with the intent to harvest, but the crop failed because of a natural disaster. It is important that producers file accurate and timely loss reports to prevent the potential loss of FSA program benefits.

Producers who have NAP coverage will be required to report crop losses on an FSA form CCC-576 - "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program."

FSA Employee's Gleaning Efforts in Aroostook County

In continuing efforts for the second year in the Feds Feed Families Program employee's from the Presque Isle Farm Service Agency Office traveled to Limestone today to the Smith's Farm to harvest broccoli from a 55 acre field that had been previously harvested.



L to R: Robbie McCurry, Key Program Technician and Larry James, Program Technician.

Together they picked 350 pounds of broccoli and donated it to the Catholic Charities which distributes the broccoli to 25 food pantries in Aroostook County. This is the second year for the Feds Feed Families nationwide.



Michael Mathers, Farm Loan Manager, carries a box of broccoli back to the truck.



L to R: Doreen Conlogue, County Executive Director, Larry James, Program Technician, and Robbie McCurry, Key Program Technician.

Last year the offices donated 1558 pounds of food statewide. This is the first year employees in Maine have participated in a gleaning effort but certainly not the last.

