

August 2012



New Hampshire FSA Updates

Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from the New Hampshire FSA State Office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from the State Office as well as any counties and may add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

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USDA Celebrates 150th Anniversary

On August 1, 2012, New Hampshire USDA Agencies held an event to celebrate the Department's 150th Anniversary. President Abraham Lincoln founded the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1862 and called it "the People's Department". A sentiment that still rings true today as the Department's diverse portfolio boasts strong support for American agriculture and local and regional food systems, as well as critical nutrition assistance, food safety, conservation, rural development, and research programs, among many other programs and initiatives.

Acting Deputy Undersecretary Judy Canales joined New Hampshire USDA leaders from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD), Farm Service Agency (FSA), US Forest Service (USFS), and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) at the Miles Smith Farm in Loudon, NH to celebrate the USDA's accomplishments in New Hampshire and thank hundreds of partners who have contributed to agriculture and forestry in the Granite State. Owners Carole Soule and Bruce Dawson, last year's recipients of the NH Association of Conservation District Producer of the Year Award, hosted the crowd on their farm that was founded in the 1830s.

Representatives of Senator Shaheen, Senator Ayotte, Congressman Guinta and Congressman Bass relayed the legislators' good wishes for the continued success of the USDA and lauded its accomplishments over the past 150 years. New Hampshire Commissioner of Agriculture, Lorraine Merrill, spoke of the importance of the State and Federal partnership in New Hampshire and the need to increase local food production for the safety, health and security of New Hampshire citizens. Jeff Holmes, President of the New Hampshire Farm Bureau reinforced Commissioner Merrill's hopes for the passage of a New Farm Bill that will continue to provide the programs New Hampshire farmers so desperately need.

Following the speeches, Terry Miller and Tom Wagner of USFS and Rick Ellsmore, NRCS presented "Two Chiefs" awards to partners and individuals for their conservation work in the White Mountain National Forest and the Upper Ammonoosuc and Israel River Watersheds. NH Conservation Leaders joined forces in 2011 to enhance fish and wildlife habitat improvement on private and federal lands. This unique collaboration between USFS and NRCS expanded the NH conservation footprint by connecting White Mountain National Forest lands and privately-owned lands to enhance fish and wildlife habitat management, including implementation of key conservation practice applications to improve cold water fisheries, control invasive species, improve dense softwood and aspen birch habitats,

decommission logging roads, build fish friendly stream crossings, and reduce soil erosion and sedimentation of surface waters and wetlands.

Following the Two Chiefs' Award ceremony, guests were treated to music donated by Drowned Valley, a local bluegrass band, and a very special local foods farmers' market including local meats, cheeses, fruits, vegetables, and maple syrup, just to name a few. USDA agencies and other organizations staffed booths to provide information to the visitors on a wide array of conservation, agriculture, and forestry programs.

The schedule included a farm tour and at the close of the festivities, the 150th birthday of the USDA was commemorated with a stone set in a new "Peoples' Garden" at the Miles Smith Farm.

Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process

ATTENTION HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS AND RANCHERS: Compensation for Claims of Past Discrimination

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 female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. This means you may be eligible if:

1. You sought a farm loan or farm-loan servicing during that period;
2. The loan was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, approved with restrictive conditions, or USDA failed to provide an appropriate loan service; and
3. You believe these actions were based on your being Hispanic or female.

For guidance, you may contact an attorney or other legal service provider in your community. If you are currently represented by an attorney regarding allegations of discrimination or in a lawsuit claiming discrimination, you should contact your attorney regarding this claims process. USDA cannot provide legal advice to you.

If you think you might be eligible to file a claim, please access the Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or the Website at www.farmerclaims.gov

People's Gardens in New Hampshire

The People's Garden Initiative is an effort that began on February 2, 2009 by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). It encourages USDA employees to establish People's Gardens at USDA facilities or to help communities create gardens. The People's Garden Initiative was named in honor of President Lincoln's description of USDA as the "People's Department".

People's Gardens vary in size and type, but all have a common purpose - to help the community they're within and the environment. Fresh fruits and vegetables maybe grown for those in need; or trees, shrubs and flowers could be planted to improve soil, water and air quality, attract wildlife, or beautify the neighborhood. All gardens are required to have three components in common:

1. They must benefit the community, in some cases by creating recreational spaces and in others by providing a harvest for a local food bank or shelter.
2. They must be collaborative - that is, the garden must be created and maintained by a partnership of local individuals, groups, or organizations.
3. They should incorporate sustainable practices. The gardens might use compost or mulch made by participants. They might contain native plants or encourage beneficial insects. They also might exemplify water conservation, for instance, capturing rain in a barrel to water the garden.

A People's Garden may be almost anywhere; a school, church, at work, community center. The possibilities are limitless! There are currently four People's Gardens in New Hampshire. For more information about the People's Garden Initiative, and to see where the current gardens are, visit us at www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden.

New Acreage Reporting Deadlines

New Hampshire FSA 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 and Peaches

February 15 - Maple Sap

May 31 - Ornamental Nursery

July 15 - Corn, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Spring Forage Seeding, and all Other Crops

November 15 - Perennial Forage, Fall Forage Seeding, and Fall-Seeded Small Grains

For more information on acreage reporting and acreage reporting deadlines contact your local FSA Office. To find an FSA County Office or the USDA Service Center closest to you, click on the County Offices link on the NH FSA website, www.fsa.usda.gov/nh, to access the county office locator.

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 20250-9450, 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).