



NEWSLETTER



September 2011

Merrimack-Belknap- Hillsborough County FSA Office

The Concord Center
10 Ferry Street
Box/Suite 212
Concord, NH 03301

603-223-6003 phone
603-223-6030 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/NH

Hours

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

County Committee Members

Charles Price, Chair
Martha Crete, Vice-Chair
Keith Bachelder, Member
William Hall Jr., Member
Eric Tenney, Member

County Farm Program Staff

Donna Juneau,
County Executive Director
Susan Sargent,
Program Technician
Melinda Marston,
Program Technician
Kelly Greenbacker,
County Operations Trainee

NH Farm Loan Staff

Sherrill Harris,
Farm Loan Manager
Lorna Wakefield,
Farm Loan Officer
Rebecca Davis,
Farm Loan Officer
William Wilson,
Farm Loan Officer
Sandra Carter,
Program Technician
Mary Kim Lavery,
Program Technician
Eric Evans,
Farm Loan Officer Trainee

Disaster Assistance Programs Available

The Farm Service Agency would like to remind both crop and livestock producers and owners of nonindustrial private forest land that programs are available to assist with disaster related recovery. If your agricultural operation or nonindustrial private forest land has recently experienced severe damage from a storm, flooding, wind, or other natural disaster there may be a FSA program available to provide you with financial and/or technical assistance.

The key disaster programs include the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP); the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP); the Tree Assistance Program (TAP); the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP); the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP); and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program.

ECP provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers to

rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters. EFRP provides funding to restore forestland damaged by natural disaster. TAP provides funding to replace fruit trees or bushes and Christmas trees damaged by natural disaster. LIP provides financial assistance for livestock deaths that result from natural disaster. ELAP provides financial assistance for honey bee and farm raised fish losses due to natural disaster. NAP provides financial assistance for crop losses due to natural disaster. SURE provides financial assistance for crop losses from quality or quantity deficiencies due to natural disasters.

Fact sheets for all of these programs can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov; click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets.

We encourage all who have suffered a disaster due to the recent severe weather conditions to contact the FSA county office at 223-6003 or via e-mail at: MBHCOUNTYFSA@nh.usda.gov.

Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Compensation for Claims of Discrimination

If you are a female farmer or rancher or a Hispanic farmer or rancher and you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits

to you for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000 because you are a female, or because you are Hispanic, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

(continued on next page)

Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Compensation for Claims of Discrimination (continued)

You may be eligible if:

- you sought a farm loan or farm-loan servicing from USDA during that period; and 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
- you believe these actions occurred because you are female or Hispanic.

"We want all producers who may be eligible to be aware of this claims process for female and Hispanic farmers and ranchers, as well as the recent settlements with Native American and African American farmers and ranchers, so they can come forward and participate in these processes," said Molly Lambert, State Director, Rural Development (RD), NH, who serves as this year's chair of the USDA State Food & Agriculture Council (SFAC).

The SFAC is comprised of State-level agency heads of the three USDA partner agencies - RD State Director Molly Lambert, Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Jay Phinizy and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, Rick Ellsmore - with membership from other USDA agencies in NH.

If you want to register your name to receive a claims package in the female and Hispanic farmers claims process, you can call the Farmer and

Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or access the Website: www.farmerclaims.gov.

In 2011, a Class Administrator will begin mailing claims packages to those who have requested one through the Call Center or Website. The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process. In order to participate, you must submit a claim to the Claims Administrator by the end of the claims period.

The claims process offers a streamlined alternative to litigation and provides at least \$1.33 billion in compensation, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. The claims process provides up to \$50,000 for each woman or Hispanic farmer who can show that USDA denied them a loan or loan servicing for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. Hispanic or female farmers who provide additional proof and meet other requirements can receive \$50,000. Successful claimants may also be eligible for funds to pay the taxes on their awards and for forgiveness of certain existing USDA loans.

There are no filing fees or other costs to claimants to participate in the program. Participation is voluntary, and individuals who opt not to participate are not precluded by the program from filing a complaint in court.

If you are currently represented by counsel regarding allegations of discrimination against USDA or in a lawsuit claiming discrimination by USDA, you should contact your counsel regarding your claims process. USDA cannot provide legal advice to you. You are not required to hire an attorney to file a claim, but you may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider in your community for additional guidance.

For more information, contact the **Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429** or access the following Website: www.farmerclaims.gov.

This announcement follows the Obama Administration's settlement of litigation brought by Native American farmers and ranchers and African American farmers. Any Native American farmer or rancher who was denied a Farm Loan or Loan Servicing by the USDA between Jan. 1, 1981 and Nov. 24, 1999, may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To request a Claims Package or for more information, call 1-888-233-5506 or visit www.IndianFarmClass.com. African-American farmers who submitted a request to file a late claim on or between October 13, 1999 and June 18, 2008 under the 1999 settlement in the earlier class action known as Pigford v. Glickman ("Pigford") and who did not receive a merits determination of their discrimination claim should call 1-866-950-5547 or 1-866-472-7826 or visit www.blackfarmercase.com.

Producers Must Submit Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Verification Consent Form to IRS



Producers are reminded they must submit an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification consent form (CCC-927 or CCC-928) to the IRS as soon as possible in order to maintain eligibility for 2009 and 2010 program benefits.

The consent form authorizes IRS to verify whether a payment recipient's AGI meets the eligibility requirements for FSA programs.

Producers who fail to file these forms before Sept. 2011 will receive a notice from the National Office stating that the producer is ineligible for 2009 and/or 2010 payments.

IRS requires written consent from all individuals or legal entities before verification of the average AGI can be provided to USDA. Individuals must submit form CCC-927 and legal entities must submit form CCC-928. Without these forms on file, eligible producers will not receive USDA program payments.

Please contact the County Office to obtain a copy of the form.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency's Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides coverage to producers for non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. Crops eligible for NAP coverage are those for which crop insurance is not available, including fruits and vegetables, honey, maple sap, and forage crops just to name a few. Further information on NAP is available from your local FSA office or on FSA's Web site at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

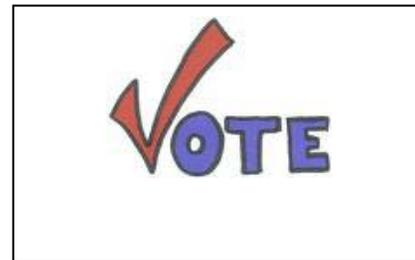
There are several deadlines approaching to sign up for NAP coverage for the 2012 crop year including a September 30, 2011 deadline for coverage for forage crops; a November 20, 2011 deadline for perennial crops; and a December 1, 2011 deadline to sign up for NAP coverage for honey and maple sap for the 2012 crop year.

Foreign Landowner Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.



County Committee Elections for Merrimack, Belknap and Hillsborough Counties

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Important Dates

November 4, 2011- Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 5, 2011 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center.

December 9, 2011 Votes are counted at the County Committee Meeting.

January 2, 2012 - Newly elected county committee members take office.

The next County Committee Meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 9, 2011 at 10:00 am in the USDA Conference Room located next door to the FSA County Office. The public is welcome to attend.

**Merrimack-Belknap-Hillsborough
County FSA
10 Ferry Street
Box/Suite 212
Concord, NH 03301**



**PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CONCORD, NH
PERMIT #1266**

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

Thank You Producers!

Thank you to all of our Producers for your cooperation during Acreage / Crop Reporting this year. The federal budget crunch significantly impacted our ability to make farm visits. We appreciate the efforts made by all of our producers to report your crop acreage by visiting our office and/or corresponding with the office via phone, fax, and E-mail.

You can contact the office 24 hours a day by sending us a fax, an E-mail, or voice mail. Our office phone number is 223-6003; our fax number is 223-6030; and our office e-mail is: MBHCOUNTYFSA@nh.usda.gov

| Selected Interest Rates for August** / September 2011 | |
|---|------------------|
| Farm Operating – Direct Loan | 2.125% |
| Farm Ownership – Direct Loan | 4.625% |
| Limited Resource Loan | 5.0% |
| Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher Loans | 1.50% |
| Emergency Loan | 3.75% |
| Farm Storage Facility Loan** | 2.250% to 3.625% |

| Dates to Remember | |
|--------------------------|---|
| September 30 | Deadline to Sign UP for NAP Forage Crop Coverage |
| November 4 | Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters |
| November 20 | Deadline to Sign Up for NAP Perennial Crop Coverage |
| December 1 | Deadline to Sign Up for NAP Honey and Maple Sap Coverage |
| December 5 | Last Day to Return Ballots to USDA Service Center |

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.