



April 2012

Maine State FSA Office

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Hours

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

Maine FSA Staff

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Farm Loan Chief

Ken Gustin,
Program Specialist/
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William E. Jordan,
District Director

Maine State Committee

Annie Allen, Chair
Anthony Carroll
Jackie Lundeen
Sandra Nutting

FSA county offices are taking appointments for producers to sign up and report acres. Contact your local county office as soon as possible to make an appointment.

| 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 |

From the Desk of the State Director:

SPRING HAS SPRUNG! It's that wonderful time of year to dig in the dirt and get things planted. Here at the FSA offices we are busy planning our People's Garden for 2012, a project we have participated in since 2009. There are 7 People's Gardens at USDA offices in Maine and 1, 630 total in all 50 states, 3 U.S. Territories and 8 foreign countries.



Each garden must have 3 components: they must benefit the community, they must be collaborative—that is, the garden must be created and maintained by a partnership of individuals, groups, or organizations. Third, they should incorporate sustainable practices. With this employees plan, plant, water, harvest and donate all of the fresh produce to local food pantries and cupboards. This helps improve accessibility to healthy affordable food at the local level. People's Gardens' around the country are demonstrating the connections we can make between providing access to nutritious food, while protecting the landscape where that food is grown, serving our communities, and helping those in need.



The People's Gardens works in conjunction with the "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" (KYF) initiative. The KYF increases emphasis on regional food systems thus having significant benefits to rural communities. Based on USDA research, 110,000 farmers are selling at local at approximately 7100 farmers markets. Across the country, communities are using local food systems to increase job opportunities, access healthy food and revitalize local economies and to keep more money in their local areas.



The following individuals are serving on the Maine State Farm Service Agency Committee. The State Committee oversees the activities of the agency, including carrying out the state agricultural conservation programs, resolving appeals from the agriculture community and helping to keep producers informed about FSA programs. "These individuals will work with USDA to help farmers and ranchers build and maintain successful operations that produce the safe, nutritious food supply that America needs while spurring economic development in our nation's rural communities," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "They bring the experience and passion necessary to help continue the Obama Administration's efforts to rebuild and revitalize rural America."

The individuals appointed to serve on this State Committee are:



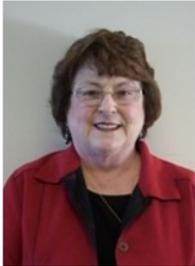
Annie Allen (Chairperson)

Allen is the Vice President and the fourth generation farming G.M. Allen & Son, Inc., a 97 year old family owned wild blueberry farm and plant. Together the Allen family farms 1200 acres of blueberry land. She also serves on the Black Bear Board of Advisors and the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine.



Anthony Carroll

Carroll raises a sixty cow dairy herd and produces corn and hay on Alderwood Farm in Limerick, Maine. Carroll is also the President of the Maine Association of Conservation Districts and Chairman of the York County Soil and Water Board.



Jackie Lundeen

Lundeen grows potatoes and grain with her husband in Aroostook County. Lundeen is also a former member of the Maine House of Representatives and served on the Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation Committee.



Sandra Nutting

Nutting has operated a national recognized Registered Holstein farm with her husband since 1972. In addition to farming, she is active in several organizations, including the Androscoggin Sagadahoc FSA County Committee, the Maine Farm Bureau, and the National Holstein Association.



Ralph Turner

Turner co-owns and operates Laughing Stock Farms, a 12 acre certified organic vegetable farm, in Freeport Maine. A professional engineer, Turner designed, constructed, and operates the 17,000 square foot greenhouse on the farm, including the refrigerated storage, irrigation and process equipment within it.

Sign-Up and Re-Enrollment Deadline Extended For CRP General Sign-Up 43

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Bruce Nelson announced that the sign-up deadline for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been extended to April 13, 2012.

Due to strong interest in CRP, the decision was made to extend CRP sign-up 43 for an additional week. I encourage all eligible farmers and ranchers to take advantage of this opportunity to participate in CRP," said Nelson. "Whether new enrollees or re-enrolling existing CRP contracts, producers who sign up for CRP help to conserve land and improve our soil, water, air and wildlife habitat resources."

After the CRP general sign-up ends on April 13, FSA will evaluate offers based on cost and the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). The EBI takes into consideration variables such as wildlife habitat, water quality protection, soil erosion reduction, air quality protection and other enduring benefits. Accepted offers will become effective Oct. 1, 2012.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA service center or visit FSA's website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

New Continuous CRP Initiative

FSA has announced a new conservation initiative to protect up to 750,000 acres of the nation's most highly erodible croplands. This initiative will assist producers with targeting their most highly erodible cropland (land with an erodibility index of 20 or greater) by enabling them to plant wildlife-friendly, long-term cover through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Producers can enroll land on a continuous basis beginning this summer at their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office. With the use of soil survey and geographic information system data, local FSA staff can quickly determine a producer's eligibility for the initiative.

Farm Record Changes

June 1, 2012 is the deadline to provide changes to your farm records at the local FSA office for the 2012 crop year. If you are changing your operation entity type, adding or dropping cropland or farms, or adding entities to your operation, contact the FSA county office by June 1.

FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff 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 Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, contact your local FSA office.

DCP-ACRE Sign-Up

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment runs from Jan. 23, 2012 through June 1, 2012. Here are some IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- All producers planting on **DCP base** acres must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payment for the farm.
- Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1st in DCP/ACRE **must** be reported to your local FSA office such as:
 - Ownership changes
 - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
 - Change in crop shares arrangements

Note: Changes cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012.

| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------|--|
| April 6 | CRP Sign-up Ends |
| June 1 | DCP Sign-up Ends |
| June 1 | Last day to notify FSA of farm record changes for 2012 |
| July 15 | Acreage Reporting |
| July 15 | NAP production reporting deadline for 2011 production. |

Farm Safety

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand, it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped.

The mechanical aspects of grain handling equipment, also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

FSA wants all farmers to have a productive crop year, and that begins with putting safety first.

Acreage Certification

Time is nearing for producers to certify their 2012 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many FSA programs. For crops enrolled in programs other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program), acreage reports are to be certified by the July 15, 2012 deadline. See the "Dates to Remember" chart for all acreage reporting dates.

Acreage reports on crops covered by NAP are due in the county office by the earlier of July 15, 2012, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

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).

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

This ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-931 to their local FSA County Office by June 15 to avoid interruption of program benefits. This form may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet>.

Gov Delivery

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation. Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will provide notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail.

FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

Producers can subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>.



Land Contract (LC) Guarantee Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans through the Land Contract (LC) Guarantee Program. The LC Guaranteed Loans will be offered to the owner of a farm who wishes to sell real estate through a land contract to a beginning farmer or a farmer who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

A land contract is an installment contract between a buyer and a seller for the sale of real property, in which complete ownership of the property is not transferred until all payments under the contract have been made.

Guarantees can be used for financing the purchase of a farm with a purchase price up to \$500,000 on a new land contract. FSA offers two types of guarantees under this program.

Prompt Payment Guarantee: A guarantee of up to the amount of three amortized annual installments plus the cost of any related real estate taxes and insurance; or

Standard Guarantee: A guarantee of 90 percent of the outstanding principal balance under the land contract.

To find out if you qualify contact your local FSA office today or see additional information, including a complete list of borrower and seller eligibility criteria and application materials through the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.



Hispanic and Women Farmers

The 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 the Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process, please visit: www.farmerclaims.gov or call 888-508-4429.

Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization's advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien;

- Be 10 years to 20 years of age;
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements;
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people;
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources;
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above;
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

| Selected Interest Rates for April 2012 | |
|---|-------|
| 90-Day Treasury Bill | 0.125 |
| Farm Operating - Direct | 1.25 |
| Farm Ownership - Direct | 3.375 |
| Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher | 1.50 |
| Emergency | 3.75 |
| Farm Storage Facility—7 Year | 1.50 |
| Farm Storage Facility—10 Year | 2.125 |
| Farm Storage Facility—12 Year | 2.375 |
| 9 Month Commodity Loan | 1.125 |

Dairy Producers Reminded of MILC Program

The Maine State Farm Service Agency would like to remind dairy producers of some important program eligibility requirements for payment under the Milk Income Loss Contract program (MILC). FSA Maine State Executive Director Donovan E. Todd, III says dairy prices may authorize potential MILC payments, but all dairy producers need to be aware of the program requirements should those conditions arise.

Dairy operators currently enrolled in MILC, need to notify the local county office if there have been any changes to their dairy operation, including member changes.

If a payment rate is announced, dairy producers enrolled in the MILC program will need to provide the local county office with documentation showing the eligible milk production and commercial milk marketing for the months with a MILC payment rate in effect.

When producers enroll in MILC, a payment start month is selected. This month remains the same through all program years, unless a change is requested by the dairy. Dairy producers are allowed to change their start month an unlimited number of times throughout their enrollment in MILC provided that the changes are requested timely.

MILC program participants are also required to comply with FSA's Adjusted Gross Income requirements each fiscal year. This certification, on a CCC-931, must be completed prior to a payment being disbursed.

New dairies that have not previously participated in the MILC program will need to fill out the CCC-580, Milk Income Loss Contract.

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.



2012 State Committee Members

Annie Allen, Chair

Anthony Carroll, Vice-Chairman

Jacqueline Lundeen, Member

Sandra Nutting, Member

Ralph Turner, Member

2012 County Committee Members

Androscoggin-Sagadahoc Aroostook

Dwight Buckley

William Bullard

Cathy Karonis

Virginia Roseberry

Adam Trundy

Joey Bouchard

James Lilley

Scott Moir

Cumberland-York

Tim Bartlett

Jennifer Grant

Edward LeBlanc

John Snell, Jr.

Dave Tuttle

Franklin

Randall Hall

Teresa Hardy

Rupert Pratt

L. Hebert York

Kennebec

Neal Caverly

Berndt Graf

Jeremiah Smith

Bridget Wright

Knox-Lincoln

Donald Burke

Robert E. Clark

Linda Dean

Joanne Myers

Julie Russell

Oxford

Carole Robbins

Laurie Weston

Peter Young

Penobscot-Hancock

Seth Bradstreet, III

Ruth Allen Gray

Terry Hicks

Barry Higgins, Jr.

Shannon Lion

Piscataquis

Owen Brown

Olive Buck

Blake Smith

Somerset

Richard Calder

Andrew Sevey

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Janet Aitken

Jeff Keene

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