



Biography

John A. Johnson
Deputy Administrator
for Farm Programs
Farm Service Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C

John A. Johnson is the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). As Deputy, Johnson is a key advisor to FSA's Administrator on farm programs and policies. He is responsible for implementing major portions of the 2002 Farm Bill including FSA's commodity price support activities (commodity loans and Loan Deficiency Payments) and the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment program delivering \$15 to \$20-billion in income support annually to America's farmers and ranchers. He is also responsible for several other programs, including: the Conservation Reserve Program, the nation's largest private lands conservation program covering 37 million acres; Crop Disaster Programs; the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program; and the \$10 billion Tobacco Buyout Program. Additionally, Johnson oversees FSA's Aerial Photography Field Office in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Johnson has been involved in various aspects of agriculture for his entire career. His diverse agricultural experience earned him the position of State Executive Director (SED) for FSA in the State of Virginia in 2001. As SED, Johnson oversaw Agency programs in both the state office as well as 50 county offices throughout Virginia.

He has served as president of the Virginia Poultry Federation and as a lobbyist for the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. In the 1980s, Johnson was a partner in his family's 800-acre farming operation which included production of soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa hay.

A native of Holmdel, New Jersey, Johnson is actively involved in the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He, his wife and two daughters, live in Broadway, Virginia.



BreakingNews

Date Posted: Jul. 23 2002

John Johnson Named USDA Deputy Administrator For Farm Programs

Washington, DC (July 23)--USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator James R. Little today announced the appointment of John Johnson as Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs effective July 29, 2002.

As Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, Johnson will oversee FSA's commodity price support activities, conservation and environmental programs, and emergency assistance efforts, including the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and county disaster declarations.

The Deputy Administrator provides direction and program and policy guidance to the farm program management team.

He also will be relied on as a key advisor to the FSA Administrator on farm programs and policies.

"With Johnson's appointment to Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, the entire top-level management team is now in place," said Little.

This is important considering FSA is responsible for implementing many of the provisions included in the 2002 Farm Bill that are so critical to American agriculture. Prior to becoming Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, Johnson was FSA's State Executive Director in Virginia.

From 1997 to 2001, he served as Vice President of Sheaffer International, an integrated water resources management company specializing in the reclamation and reuse of wastewater for farmers, communities, and others.

Between 1995 and 1997, Johnson was President of the Virginia Poultry Federation.

He was employed as Assistant Director for Public Affairs with the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation from 1989 to 1995. For more information, call Dann Stuart at 202-720-0474.

See Related Websites/Articles:

- Farm Service Agency

**John Johnson, VP of Strategic Administration
National Pork Board**

U.S. Farm & Ranch Alliance: Collaborating in Agriculture

Thursday, 10:00 a.m.



John Johnson is the Vice President of Strategic Administration for the National Pork Board in Des Moines, Iowa. He is responsible for providing strategic support to the Chief Executive Officer, overseeing organizational goal-setting and accountability measurements and facilitating cross-departmental coordination.

Johnson also is responsible for directing high-level, cross-functional projects that require engagement and direction from the Board of Directors at the National Pork Board or the senior management team. He serves as a member of the leadership team and provides strategic insight and management of various Checkoff related issues.

Prior to joining the National Pork Board on July 16, 2009, Johnson served seven years for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) as the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs in Washington, D.C. Appointed by President Bush, he was responsible for administering the nation's farm subsidy programs, disaster assistance programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, and the Tobacco Buyout Program.

Prior to joining FSA, Johnson served as Vice President at Sheaffer International, an environmental management company that markets wastewater reclamation and reuse systems. He also served as President of the Virginia Poultry Federation and as Assistant Director of Public Affairs for the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. Johnson has a lifetime of experience in production agriculture, agricultural policy and program administration.

**Josh Svaty, Senior Advisor to Region 7
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

EPA's Vision for Stewardship

Thursday, 1:45 p.m.



Josh Svaty was named EPA Region 7 Senior Advisor to the Administrator on January 13, 2011. Prior to working for the EPA, Svaty was secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Svaty managed a \$27 million budget, a 380 employee workforce and statutory duties for 17 programs.

He is the fifth-generation of his family to farm in Ellsworth County, Kan. The Svaty farm is a diversified operation that includes wheat, milo, soybeans, corn, sunflowers, a cow/calf herd and sheep. Svaty served as the State Representative of the 108th District in Kansas for seven years.

His committee assignments included the committees for Energy and Utilities, Agriculture and Natural Resources and the joint committee on Energy and Environmental Policy. Svaty has testified before the U.S. Congress on agriculture, energy and water policy issues. He holds a B.A. from Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas.

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Former 'farm boys' now tackling major FSA challenges

11-01-2005

By JEFF MORELAND

WASHINGTON, D.C. — They started out as a couple of Mid-Atlantic farm boys, but now they are tackling some of the United States Department of Agriculture's most pressing issues. Despite the hectic schedules that come along with their jobs, John Johnson and Steve Connelly are loving what they do for their country and for agriculture these days in the nation's capital.

Ask Johnson, currently USDA's deputy administrator for farm programs with the Farm Service Agency, and he will jokingly tell you he's a man who can't keep a job. Actually, he continues to move up the ladder so rapidly, it just seems that way.

Johnson grew up in Holmdel, N.J., in Monmouth County working with his father at a farm management company which they later purchased. They operated a soybean, wheat and alfalfa hay business with between 800 and 900 acres, also selling hay and straw to New Jersey's vibrant horse industry. They produced about 40,000 bales per year, as well as selling around 20,000 bales they purchased from New York, Pennsylvania and Canada.

Johnson and his father noticed changes in the agriculture around them in 1988. His father had turned 65 years old and could retire. The farm was facing the same problems as many like it; a tough labor market, leaving them more work to do with less and less help, coupled with rising real estate values. Since the Johnsons rented rather than owning their farm land, they were not able to take advantage of the skyrocketing land prices and came to the decision it was time for a change.

"We couldn't afford to stay in New Jersey because the land was rented. We didn't own an inch of it," Johnson said. "We decided to quit while we were still friends, and we had our farm sale on March 17, 1989."

Johnson decided he would put his agriculture background to use for his next line of work. Between leaving the farm and landing in Washington, he has worked for several organizations, including the Virginia Division of Soil and Water Conservation, the Virginia Farm Bureau and the Virginia Poultry Federation, where he was hired as president in 1995. Johnson held other positions along the way, but in 1991, he was hired as Virginia's state executive director of the Farm Service Agency.

"I was looking for another opportunity when the Bush Administration came in, so I threw my hat in the ring and was appointed state executive director of FSA," Johnson explained. "Out of 51 SEDs, I was the 50th appointed. I'm sitting across the table from the 51st."

Across the table from Johnson sat Steve Connelly, who currently serves as assistant deputy administrator of farm programs under Johnson. Connelly was raised on a third-generation farm in Rising Sun, Md., in Cecil County and still lives in the town today. He enrolled at Colorado State University out of high school, majoring in ag economics. He promptly returned to the University of Maryland the following year, where he went on to graduate with a degree in ag and resource economics. While at Maryland, Connelly worked as an animal caretaker of a herd of pigs at the Beltsville Research Center. His first job out of college was with Maryland Farm Bureau, and he advanced to work for the Maryland Department of Agriculture from there, serving as a legislative liaison for eight years. His next stop was with the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation as

the organization's executive director. While there, Connelly said he was proud of his accomplishments in helping teach the young people of Maryland about agriculture, as well as helping get the legislation passed that brought the Maryland "ag tag" to reality. When he was approached to seek the position of executive director of Maryland's FSA, he took the opportunity and served in the position for two and a half years before joining Johnson in Washington, where he has been since spring of 2004.

"It's an honor to have been selected by the Bush Administration," Connelly said of his latest position.

Included in Johnson's and Connelly's responsibilities under farm programs are Direct and Countercyclical Payments (DCP), commodity loans and LDPs, disaster assistance programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, and the Tobacco Buyout program. The FSA has numerous challenges ahead in these tasks, and Johnson said he and Connelly are taking the lead on some of the largest, which include the consolidation of some offices to increase productivity and service in a program called "FSA Tomorrow."

The Farm Service Agency came into being in the late 1930s around the time of The Great Depression, according to Johnson, and he said the system hasn't changed much over the years.

"Our agency hasn't changed a whole lot in terms of our structure and how we deliver programs, and I think going into the 21st Century, we really need to change."

One of the initiatives going for FSA is a program Johnson called MIDAS, or Modernize and Integrate the Delivery of Agriculture Systems. He said this is automation support of how computers are used by the agency and how information is delivered to farmers and ranchers in the field.

"The computer system we have in our offices was installed in 1985. I'd like your readers to think where they were in 1985 in terms of technology. We're still, for all intents and purposes, living on that system, and it's about ready to melt, or turn to dust on us," Johnson said. "It's been a great workhorse and served us well, but it cannot connect to the Internet, the information is stored in stovepipes, databases that can't connect to each other. There is no real-time data there, and the data is never current."

He said these are some of the limitations that keep farmers from signing up for programs on the computers from their homes if they choose that option.

Connelly is conducting a national review of the nation's 2,351 FSA offices, which ties directly to the discussion of on-again, off-again office closings around the nation.

Connelly explained that about 1,600 of those offices are located within 25 miles of each other, and many offices have seen a reduced workload with the loss of the tobacco program and others no longer in existence. To make the agency more efficient and allow for better service, he said the plan is to create an ideal office, or one that would employ four people in an office and be a minimum of 30 miles from another office. He explained that one of the goals of FSA Tomorrow was to restructure without reducing staffing levels, and part of that included a two-year program called "Early Out Buyout," which was related to the reduction of workload for those eliminated programs.

"We are attempting to reduce about 850 positions nationwide with a program called 'Early Out Buyout,' which ends Nov. 3 of this year," he said. "After that, we will still have 45 offices with no full-time person and open only part-time during the week. We'll have another 145 offices that only have one person in them and 360 offices with only two people. The real goal is to make sure we have better staffed offices that are better trained, and they have the equipment and tools they need to do a better job."

"We want to deliver better service to our producers," Johnson added. "If we have an office with only one or two people in it, we cannot deliver the producers in that county good service. If somebody's on leave and somebody else gets sick, there's nobody else to keep that office open. We need to have a deep bench of well-trained employees, and with the system we have in place today, we don't have a deep bench in all of our county offices. A lot of them don't, maybe 500 or 600 of them don't. We need to look at those offices and say, 'Could we provide better service, have a deeper bench and have more, better-trained employees in an office if we consolidated some of those offices?' If anybody from a pure business sense asked that question, the answer would be yes for a good number of our offices."

Connelly said he understands that nobody wants to lose their county office, and that many people may feel something is being taken from them. He said the agency is simply attempting to do as much as it can to provide the best service possible with limited resources.

As for those limited resources, the USDA will be receiving less money than requested by President Bush in 2006, the third consecutive year that has happened, according to Johnson. He said the agency has to make decisions that serve everyone equally, adding that some FSA offices can provide one dollar's worth of benefits for as little as two cents, while others require as much as two dollars to be spent to achieve that same one dollar's worth of benefits.

Despite the effectiveness both Johnson and Connelly saw from the FSA Tomorrow program, plans were announced on Tuesday, Oct. 18, to eliminate it, according to reports from the Associated Press. A hearing had been scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 20 in the Senate Agriculture Committee, but in a letter sent Tuesday to Chairman Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., J.B. Penn, undersecretary of the USDA, said the agency is scrapping the plan.

Connelly said the program is on indefinite hold.

"FSA will continue a dialogue with Congress and our stakeholders to identify ways to maintain our great customer service."

Regardless of what the future brings, both Connelly and Johnson said they enjoy their work and look forward to whatever challenges lie ahead. Connelly said he likes life in his native Cecil County. He said his life has always been very busy, and it doesn't feel to him as if he's far removed from the farm.

"I'm 43, and I still feel like I'm in my early 30s," he laughed. "I just had my 25-year high school reunion, and it seems like yesterday I was graduating from college."

Johnson recalled his early days in farming fondly, and said he missed it for some time after he moved on.

"I thoroughly enjoyed farming," he said. "I think farming is probably the most satisfying way to make a living, and also the most difficult way to make a living. For the first 10 years after I quit farming, I'd fall asleep at night thinking about how I could get back into farming. I've kind of stopped doing that now, but I've got enough land at my home in the Shenandoah Valley that I can pretend I'm farming."

He added that he is often asked about his career plans, but said he always gives the same answer.

"People ask me if I planned my career, and I tell them only God in Heaven planned it," he said. "He just drops things in my lap periodically."

BUFFERNOTES



www.nacdnet.org/buffers

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BUFFER NOTES

is written by the
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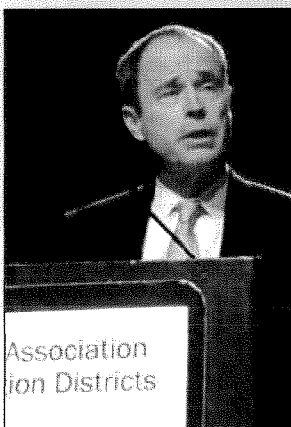
CRP LEGACY BENEFITS ALL, YOST TELLS NACD

CRP is "the sharpest tool in USDA's conservation tool box," Farm Service Agency Associate Administrator for Programs Mike Yost told more than 1,000 attendees at the recent NACD annual meeting in Houston.

Addressing a plenary session of the 60th annual meeting, Yost noted that CRP will mark its 20th anniversary this year. He highlighted some program accomplishments, including:

- 450 million tons of soil erosion is prevented each year.
- 2 million acres of wetlands have been protected or restored.
- 34 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs have been established across the nation. These federal-state partnerships "are one of our best tools," he said. CREPs are protecting resources as diverse as New York City's water supply and the Florida Everglades, he added.

"Every American is reaping the rewards of this program," he said. The program works only with the cooperation of America's farmers and ranchers, and partners like conservation districts, FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, he said.



Mike Yost

As the program has grown in size and complexity, technical assistance needs have also grown, said Yost. "Workload demand will be critical," he said, adding that a plan for providing technical assistance will provide roles for federal, state and nongovernmental partners, with conservation districts included in that mix.

On a personal level, Yost noted that his father and son in Minnesota both have CRP lands. The theme of this year's NACD annual meeting, Living a Legacy, Leaving a Legacy, is "also a perfect fit for CRP," he said.

Also at NACD's annual meeting, FSA Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs John Johnson provided the association's Board of Directors with an update on CRP. Bob Stephenson, FSA

director of the Conservation and Environmental Programs Division, was on hand to brief the Agriculture Lands Resources Committee on new CRP developments.

The committee learned that among FSA's tasks in the coming calendar year is compliance checks on all CRP lands offered contract re-enrollments or extensions.

During the annual meeting, it was announced that contract holders for CRP lands eligible for re-enrollments and/or extensions would be notified of their options by letter. A new CRP signup was also announced. (See a related story in this newsletter.)

In related news, FSA's booth at the annual meeting offered information about new computer-based services to support the increasing numbers of producers who rely on computers for their operations. FSA staff explained how integrating GIS technology into service centers and making access available to producers will enable timely program delivery, reduce customer burdens and allow for delivery of quality products and services. FSA's eGov was also featured at the booth. FSA's eGov provides producers the option to access records and sign up for key programs without leaving home. For more information on the service, visit FSA's Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/.

"Every American is reaping the rewards of this program."

-- Mike Yost on CRP



ENROLLMENT ACTIVITY AND NEWS

The following information is excerpted from FSA's January 2005 CRP Monthly Summary. "Enrollment and Activity and News" is a regular feature in BufferNotes.

- Since Earth Day, April 22, 2004, contracts on 111,984 acres of wetland practices (including adjacent upland buffers) have been approved. As of January 2006, wetland practice contracts (including general and continuous sign-up) total 1.98 million acres.

- Initiatives as of January: upland bird habitat buffers (CP33), 76,411 acres; bottomland hardwood trees (CP31), 21,994 acres; non-flood plain and playa wetlands (CP23a), 15,029 acres; flood-plain wetlands (CP23), 82,339 acres.

- Continuous sign-up No. 30 is projected to reach 388,000 acres, 50 percent ahead of fiscal year 2004 continuous sign-up No. 28 (258,000 acres), and 15 percent below fiscal year 2003's sign-up (445,000 acres).

- As of January 2006, 3,238,007 acres were enrolled nationwide in CCRP and CREP. Average rental rate nationally was \$95.85. There were more than 305,000 contracts.

The full December 2005 CRP Monthly Summary can be viewed at www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp_statistics.htm.

CRP SIGN-UP, RE-ENROLLMENTS ANNOUNCED

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced Jan. 31 that USDA would begin notifying certain agricultural producers with CRP contracts expiring in 2007 that they may extend or re-enroll their contracts.

"Approximately 16 million acres subject to CRP contracts expire in 2007," said Johanns. "Fulfilling President Bush's directive to allow eligible farmers and ranchers to re-enroll or extend their CRP contracts helps ensure that the quality of soil, water, air and wildlife benefits of CRP continue across the nation for years to come."

FSA county offices have begun notifying CRP participants by mail with expiring contracts in 2007 if they are eligible for re-enrollments or two- to five-year extensions. Participants eligible for re-enrollment will be offered a 10- or 15-year contract provided there are restored wetlands on the original land enrolled in the contract. Fifteen-year contracts expiring Sept. 30, 2007, are not eligible for extension.

EBI is key to contract future

FSA used the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) to determine eligibility for CRP re-enrollments or extensions. Additional credit was considered for contracts within national CRP conservation priority areas. The EBI addresses expected benefits to water quality, erosion, enduring benefits, air quality and wildlife habitat.

FSA ranked individual contracts into one of five tiers based on the environmental benefits of the original EBI score. Eligible participants ranking in the first tier (i.e., between 81-100 percent) of the EBI will be afforded the opportunity to re-enroll their land in new contracts. Farmers and ranchers with wetlands in this top tier ranking are eligi-

ble for a 15-year contract.

Eligible participants ranking in the second tier (i.e. between 61-80 percent) may extend their CRP contracts for five years. Eligible participants ranking within the third tier (i.e. between 41-60 percent) may extend their CRP contracts by four years. Eligible participants ranking in the fourth tier (i.e. between 21-40 percent) may receive three-year extensions. Eligible participants ranking in the bottom tier may extend their contracts by two years.

Before approving a re-enrollment contract or an extended contract, FSA will review the contract to ensure that the required cover is maintained and there is compliance with other contract provisions. In addition, to be eligible, participants must be able to show that they meet eligibility requirements for the new enrollment period. In the case of re-enrollments, updated rental rates will apply.

General sign-up to begin March 27

USDA also announced that a general CRP sign-up will be held this spring. Farmers and ranchers will be able to make offers for CRP's competitive general sign-up from March 27, 2006, through April 14, 2006, at their local FSA offices. Offers for general sign-up will be evaluated based on five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits) and cost.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers protect their environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolling in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers, with Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing rental payments, cost-share and technical assistance.

More information on CRP developments can be reviewed in the July, November and December 2005 issues of BufferNotes at <http://nacdn.org/buffers/archive.htm>. Contact your

local FSA office or visit the FSA Web site at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm>.

WASHINGTON RESEARCH FOCUSES ON BUFFER INCOME

A lot of attention has been placed on value of riparian forest buffers in protecting agricultural water courses. Researchers in Washington State found that partial harvest of a buffer can also provide economic value. The researchers also noted that profitability of buffers can be an inducement to participation in voluntary conservation programs. Their findings were reported in the July/August 2005 issue of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation.

Carolyn J. Henri, an economist at Washington State University in Stanwood, California, and Jon D. Johnson, an associate professor at Washington State University in Puyallup, Washington, investigated the income potential of a hybrid poplar riparian buffer on a western Washington blueberry farm. They inventoried trees in the buffer, developed several management scenarios for the trees and evaluated the economic potential of each scenario. The issue of whether a harvested buffer could adequately maintain its environmental function was beyond the scope of the research, they reported in the Journal.

"Results show that a positive net present value can be achieved in the buffer by harvesting 50 percent of the timber volume and selling half as veneer logs," they reported. Net present value was slightly negative when one third of the harvestable timber was sold. Harvest and sale of only pulpwood was not profitable, they added.

Achieving a positive net return depended greatly on harvest volume, they reported, adding, "How much timber volume can be removed from a buffer without jeopardizing its water protection function is currently unknown in western

NACD TA REPORT OFFERS THREE AREAS OF ACTION

The National Association of Conservation Districts Agricultural Lands Resources (ALR) Committee recently completed its report to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) on "The Future of Technical Assistance for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)."

NACD President Bill Wilson handed the final document to John Johnson, FSA deputy administrator for Farm Programs, at the recent NACD Annual Meeting in Houston. The report offers three key recommendations.

It summarizes concerns that have been expressed by districts and partners about the expected surge of CRP work. Contracts on 28 million acres are due to expire over the next few years, many of which will likely be re-enrolled. The process will be more involved, due to the increase in program complexity since CRP's inception in 1985. At the same time, technical assistance (TA) workloads for other farm bill conservation programs have grown substantially due to new and

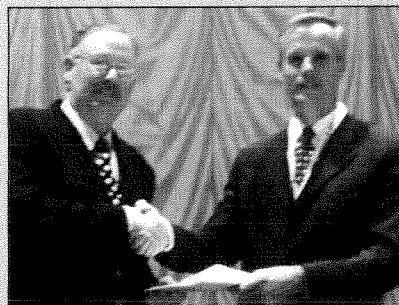
increased authorizations in the 2002 Farm Bill. Overall, TA funding has not matched the financial assistance program growth.

The ALR Committee, led by Chair Luther Waterland of Montana, recommended three areas of action.

1. Improve programmatic estimate of technical assistance needs. The process has evolved over the 20-year life of the program. Recommendations in this area would include obtaining a better measure of actual workload and how it varies geographically. Incorporating natural resource measures and statistics from conservation districts and technical services providers would help in formulating better estimates for the future. A better understanding of the workload for each aspect of the program should also be developed.

2. Adopt a set of principles to optimize environmental benefits. The committee included 10 suggestions, with the overarching goal that there should be a commitment to conservation by all CRP TA providers. The report recommends building on the expansion of technical assistance providers, including the use of nontraditional sources. It calls for ensuring the technical competence and capacity of providers. Another suggestion is to ensure consistency by making sure TA providers use the existing Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide and

ment to conservation by all CRP TA providers. The report recommends building on the expansion of technical assistance providers, including the use of nontraditional sources. It calls for ensuring the technical competence and capacity of providers. Another suggestion is to ensure consistency by making sure TA providers use the existing Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide and



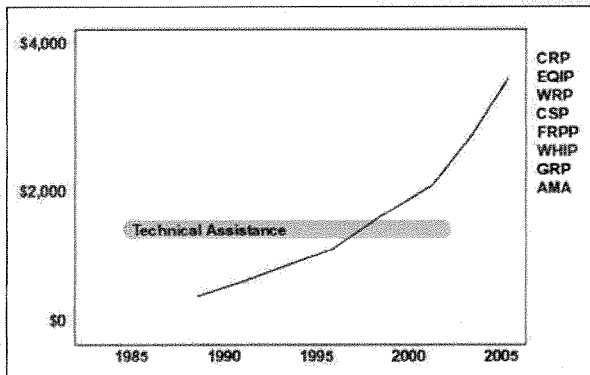
NACD President Bill Wilson (left) hands over a technical assistance report to FSA Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs John Johnson during the NACD annual meeting in Houston, Texas.

other established technical protocols. It suggests utilizing a conservation plan as the common tool for program participation and providing for continuity in service (point of contact) to clients.

3. Implement key administrative and legal arrangements. The seven items in this area covered issues such as tort and liability protection, streamlining contract processes, training, consistency and equity, and flexibility.

NACD will continue to work with FSA to help address CRP technical assistance concerns. The report indicates there are challenges ahead but that they are surmountable if all of the potential participants work toward solutions, keeping both conservation and the customer in mind.

NACD Director of Government Affairs Rich Duesterhaus coordinated preparation of the report. For more information, contact him at rich-duesterhaus@nacdn.org.



Graphic shows how spending on conservation programs has increased while TA funding hasn't kept pace. Numbers in left column are in millions.

Washington." They also noted that poplar wood production returns are comparable to lower-end local crops such as hay and green peas.

The buffer they studied is in Skagit County, Washington. The 11.3-acre buffer was established in 1994 on the north side of a slough. It is adjacent to a 25-acre field of blueberries.

In addition to their findings on harvest value, the researchers also noted that "Environmental credits, such as carbon, water quality and habitat credits are potential future sources of income from riparian buffers." They added: "The use of alternative species and extension of the harvest

age are also potential means of enhancing buffer net income on smaller acreages."

The authors noted that the issue of whether voluntary buffers in riparian zones should be actively managed or left as a "no touch" zone is a matter of debate. However, they added, "If riparian buffers could be managed economically, the net cost to both landowners and government agencies of installing and maintaining buffers could be greatly reduced. In addition, the ability to manage the buffer profitably is a critical element to the voluntary adoption of riparian buffers as a widespread farming practice."

CSP SIGN-UP UNDER WAY

The 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up is under way in 60 watersheds nationwide. The sign-up began Feb. 13 and will conclude March 31.

USDA announced preliminary selection of 110 watersheds for fiscal year 2006 based on the president's budget request. Based on available funding, CSP will be offered in 60 watersheds across all 50 states, the Caribbean and Guam.

The sign-up will only include those producers who do not

have an existing CSP contract. To be eligible for CSP, most of a producer's agricultural operation must fall within the boundaries of a selected watershed. Applications which meet CSP's minimum requirements as set forth in the amendment to the Interim Final Rule published in the Federal Register March 25, 2005, will be placed in enrollment categories. Categories will be funded in alphabetical order until funds are exhausted. The CSP amendment to the Interim Final Rule is available for viewing at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>.

Certain conservation buffers are among practices that boost a producer's qualifications for

CSP. They include filter strips, terraces and grassed waterways.

Producers begin the application process by filling out a self-assessment to determine if they meet the basic qualifications for CSP. Self-assessment workbooks are available in hard copy at USDA Service Centers within the watersheds, and electronically at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>.

2006 marks the third CSP sign-up. The privately-owned land currently enrolled in CSP covers nearly 11 million acres in the 220 eligible watersheds in all 50 states and the Caribbean area.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. Payments are made using three tiers of conservation contracts. CSP will be available any year on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows.

Additional information about CSP is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/.

BUFFER BRIEFS

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BufferNotes is available on the web in both html and pdf

formats. Send an email to BufferNotes-request@nacdn.net, and we will add you to our email list and send you a monthly email summary and link to the complete online version of BufferNotes. Due to a technical problem, some email addresses added to our subscription list in the past year may have been lost. If you subscribed during any time in 2005, please renew the subscription by emailing the above address. Mailing addresses for hard copies of the newsletter were not affected. Those addresses were updated for distribution of the December 2005 newsletter. They will be updated again for the March issue.

Great Lakes Basin grants deadline nears

The Great Lakes Commission is accepting grant applications for demonstration, program development and information/education projects that improve water quality through soil erosion and sediment control. The application deadline is March 15, 2006. Visit the Great Lakes Basin Program Web site at www.glc.org/basin to view the RFP and the online application submittal process. Call the Great Lakes Commission at 734-971-9135 for more information. In 2005, the program funded 128 active projects.

Share your partnership success stories

There's nothing like a good success story, and sharing it nationwide makes it even better. BufferNotes currently reaches about 9,100 conservation partners across the nation in a monthly newsletter and thousands more on the web. Our newsletter mailing list includes about 3,000 conservation districts, virtually all local USDA service centers, state and national partners and policymakers, media and non-governmental agencies. We are always in search of partnership success stories. The goal is to provide practical information for conservationists who want to enhance their own CRP, CCRP and CREP activities. We are also interested in how programs such as these are blended with other local, state and national programs to accomplish conservation goals. Contact: Bill Berry, Editor, BufferNotes, 1973 Strong's Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481, 715-341-9119, billnick@charter.net.

Agroforestry Notes topic is visual simulation

The January issue of Agroforestry Notes, published by the National Agroforestry Center, is entirely devoted to visual simulation as a tool for installing riparian buffers,

windbreaks and other practices. As a conservation tool, visual simulation uses image-editing computer software to present illustrations of how systems would appear at various stages of development or with different species compositions or arrangements. Agroforestry Notes is on the Web at <http://www.unl.edu/nac/pubs.html#periodicals>.

NCASI bulletin focuses on riparian management

The National Council for Air and Stream Improvement has recently released Technical Bulletin No. 908, Riparian Zone Forest Management and Protection of Biodiversity: A Problem Analysis. The bulletin highlights recent scientific developments and expert perspectives on riparian management and effects on biodiversity in the Pacific Northwest. It explores the political and scientific aspects surrounding riparian management in the region, focusing on the effectiveness of best management practices in conserving specific aspects of diversity, such as impacts of disturbance on imperiled or sensitive species. The report was produced by a multidisciplinary team led by Dr. Larry Irwin, manager of NCASI's Western Wildlife Program, and Dr. Daniel Sarr of the National Park Service. The report can be viewed at <http://www.ncasi.org/>.

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**Statement of
Candace Thompson
Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs
Farm Service Agency
United States Department of Agriculture**

Before the

**Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
March 31, 2009**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Forest Service (FS), thank you for the opportunity to talk about the drought situation in California. We will present a high-level summary of the programs FSA offers to help farmers and ranchers mitigate the effects of the drought and the efforts of the FS to assure healthier forests.

Many of you are aware that California is the nation's leading producer of agricultural goods. California's farmers and ranchers generate nearly \$36 billion in market value. While the state has only four percent of the nation's farms, it produces 13 percent of the national gross cash receipts. Furthermore, nine of the top 10 revenue-producing counties in the nation are in California, including the top three counties Fresno, Tulare and Kern which averaged more than \$3 billion each in sales of agricultural commodities. Fresno, the leader, would rank higher than half the States in the U.S. California is also the nation's leader in agricultural exports, annually shipping more than \$11 billion in food and commodities around the world. The State's top exports are tree nuts, fruits, vegetables and dairy products. There are 350 different crops grown commercially in the state.

California is rich in natural resources with ideal growing conditions. However, the one resource that adversely affects all of the State's agricultural production when it is in short supply is water.

All of the State's producers are at the mercy of this 3-year drought. Since agriculture is such a potent economic influence on California, when water becomes a commodity itself rather than a natural resource, the overall state economy suffers greatly. Farmers and ranchers especially are hurt. Financial challenges threaten their businesses and put their families and communities at serious economic risk.

A critical part of USDA's FS mission remains sustaining the health of our forests to protect the quality of our nation's water supply. Drought will affect the quantity, quality, and timing of water coming from the National Forests in California. Long-term effects of drought include diminished health of forest lands and may increase the potential for catastrophic wildfires in the coming fire season.

The 18 National Forests and Grasslands in California that encompass 20 million acres which equates to 20 percent of the total land area in the State. These Forests provide recreational opportunities to 30 million visitors every year. In addition, these National Forests are home to 75 percent of wildlife and fish found in California.

National Forests in California are the source of fifty percent of the State's water supply and encompass 2,400 of the State's reservoirs. In addition, National Forest System lands provide a vast reservoir of ground water storage, drinking water and stream flow throughout the year.

Our Goal Today

Today, our goal is to explain how USDA assists producers when they experience prolonged drought conditions. As an adjunct to the adversities faced by the farming and ranching industries, we will also address the impact the drought is having on our forests.

The FSA has many of the responsibilities for handling agriculture's disaster recovery. However, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) also provides agricultural producers help in managing their business risks through effective, market-based risk management solutions, namely, insurance contracts.

General Background

Drought is the most frequent disaster addressed by USDA. In 2008, 903 of the 1,488 counties designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as disaster areas were named for drought and drought-related causes. Those 903 counties represented 27 States. The national situation was even worse the prior two years. In 2007, the Secretary declared 1,900 counties as primary disaster areas and of those, 1,500 were because of drought. In 2006, about 90 percent of the requests were for disaster assistance, affecting 47 States. Drought designations so far in 2009 represent two-thirds of all Secretarial primary disaster counties.

While many States, especially in the Midwest, recovered from drought in more recent years, California's severe drought conditions in 2008 and 2009 will likely create higher than normal demand for USDA's mandatory disaster assistance programs, particularly the Livestock Forage Program (LFP).

The State's farms require extraordinary irrigation usage, assuming that water is available. Indeed, irrigation has put a wedge between agriculture and all other water consumers, and created conflicts within the industry. As an example, cotton producers in the Westlands Water District of California have lost water supplies to tree crops. Environmental rulings and drought are reportedly causing many cotton growers west and southwest of the Fresno area to abort planting entirely this year. That area normally is a large base for upland and pima cotton production.

Forest Health

The second year of drought conditions in the region in 2008 had an impact on the health of a variety of forested ecosystems. All forests in central, northeastern, and southern California experienced severe to extreme drought last year leading to above normal levels of conifer and hardwood tree mortality.

Native bark beetles continue to be a major cause of tree mortality in California. The most notable recent event was the catastrophic tree die-off during 2003 and 2004 where thousands of trees were killed in an area over one-half million acres. At-risk areas span all ownerships. When, where, and the extent to which mortality occurs is influenced by forest stand conditions and weather patterns. Due to drought conditions, tree mortality is expected to increase. Based on current precipitation levels, this year's bark beetle-caused mortality will likely be similar to 2008.

Wildfire

It is too early to assess the coming fire season in California with a high degree of confidence in any predictions. Typically, the FS will get a detailed and final assessment of potential fire risks in June. The nature and magnitude of lightning events also play a significant role in how active a California fire season may become, regardless of drought conditions. The worst of these events usually occur in late July or August, but can come as early as June, as evidenced by the devastating dry lightning storm last year.

California's National Forests are exhibiting signs of stress resulting from the current drought including increased mortality resulting from insect and disease outbreaks, increased fuel loading, and increased wildfire severity. The general health of the National Forests and Grasslands in California in turn affect multiple other resource values, including wildlife and fish habitat, recreational opportunities, grazing levels, and water availability.

Other Drought Impacts on Forests

Long-term drought leads to a cascade of effects on many other resources including loss of habitat for wildlife and fish, decreased opportunities for grazing, and potentially increased conflicts surrounding water entitlements. As stated earlier, these Forests provide recreational opportunities to 30 million visitors every year and are home to 75 percent of wildlife and fish found in California.

Of approximately 200,000 acres of meadows on National Forest System lands in the Sierra Nevada, about 40 percent are already affected by erosion and decreased water storage. Prolonged dry conditions would threaten the 120,000 acres of meadows not already degraded, and would hinder restoration of degraded meadows. Meadows are also expected to have a greater importance in the future as a lower cost way to store water that is released during the year into the streams and rivers to meet the ever-increasing demand for water.

Forest Service Drought-Related Actions

With the help of Congress, the FS is taking immediate action to address the many effects of the current drought, including one of the biggest immediate threats to California's residents, stands of dead and dying trees and the threats posed by catastrophic wildfires.

Fuels Reduction

The FS plans to spend \$162 million on fuels reduction projects in California this fiscal year, treating over 267,000 acres. These projects include activities such as prescribed burning, vegetation treatments, and biomass utilization. The FS will also continue to develop cooperative projects between agencies and all forest land owners. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will provide additional support for these mitigation activities. The FS and USDA are currently in the process of approving projects for these funds.

Fire Preparedness and Suppression

California will continue to use the Predictive Services group to forecast potential fire activity in preparation for critical fire situations and conditions. These determinations provide the necessary support for the authorization of firefighting augmentation plans, extended staffing actions, and movement of aerial and ground resources.

Forest Health Treatments

Vegetation management (thinning) is the most effective tool the FS has for reducing bark beetle-caused tree mortality. Thinning improves tree vigor, reduces susceptibility to bark beetle attack, and lowers the potential for catastrophic wildfire. The Agency will spend \$3.6 million on forest thinning projects on national forest system and state and private lands in California during 2009. Over 8,000 acres on national forest system lands and 1,000 acres on state and private lands are planned to be treated.

Rehabilitation & Restoration

The FS is focusing on habitat rehabilitation and restoration in areas impacted by previous wildfires. The Agency is spending \$13 million this year to stabilize soil, restore watersheds and habitat, and reforest areas burned by wildfire in California. Over 2,300 acres of water or soil resources will be treated to improve watershed conditions and 137 miles of stream habitat will be restored or enhanced. Over 12,000 acres of burned forests from the fires of 2007 and 2008 will be reforested this year.

Farm and Ranch Issues: What FSA Is Able to Do

The Agency offers programs established through legislation to help producers recover from financial losses. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) increased the level of assistance for 2008 crop losses and the number of producers eligible under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), provided for in the 2008 Farm Bill. California producers will benefit from a Recovery Act provision announced by Secretary Vilsack two-weeks ago that permits farmers to pay a "buy-in" fee to become eligible for disaster programs. Many farmers were not eligible for mandatory disaster assistance, because they lacked insurance coverage or were not participating in FSA's Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The buy-in waiver gives them an opportunity to pay the fee through May 18, 2009, which provides them eligibility for several disaster programs.

Last month, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced the creation of an Interagency Federal Drought Action Team. The team's mission is to work cooperatively in response to communities facing significant drought. The team's plans call for joining forces with Governor Schwarzenegger and his State's response team to minimize the social, economic and environmental effects of the current drought. A standing group made up of several USDA agencies, called the National Food and Agriculture Council, is providing the coordinating mechanism to assist in this endeavor, beginning with a listing of current programs that can be implemented quickly this summer as the drought situation unfolds.

Disaster Designations

There are four types of disaster designations that immediately trigger the availability of low-interest FSA Emergency (EM) loans to eligible producers in all primary and contiguous counties: a Presidential major disaster declaration; USDA Secretarial disaster designation; an FSA Administrator's Physical Loss Notification; and a quarantine designation.

Counties can qualify for EM loans if a producer has suffered at least a 30 percent loss in crop production. If the county is declared a disaster area, producers with crop losses or a physical loss to livestock or real estate become eligible for the loans; they must be U.S. citizens, have an acceptable credit history and be unable to receive credit from commercial sources. Later, I will go into more detail about EM loans.

In 2007, 56 of California's 58 counties were declared primary or contiguous disaster areas because of drought, and in 2008, 57 counties were similarly designated (*see Exhibit 1; California Drought Designation by County*).

In response to these disasters, USDA has distributed more than \$400 million to California producers over the past three crop years through crop insurance payments and FSA's disaster assistance programs.

A Change from the 2002 Farm Bill

The 2002 Farm Bill provided disaster assistance programs through congressional appropriations that were funded after the disasters had occurred. In contrast, the 2008 Farm Bill provides a continuous funding mechanism for disaster programs and offers some additional recovery options for producers who take some extra steps to manage their risks.

2008 Farm Bill

Title XII of the 2008 Farm Bill provided farmers a number of mandatory supplemental disaster assistance programs. These programs created an extra incentive for risk management by requiring producers to purchase crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) coverage to participate in the programs. FSA staff in California and elsewhere in the U.S. have worked diligently to inform producers, their industry associations and agricultural media about the new features, programs and provisions in this new law.

National and State FSA training for Disaster Assistance Programs, the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and other Farm Bill programs and provisions has been provided to all the county FSA offices in California. In addition to the repeated news releases and newsletter stories on the various program's availability, informational meetings have been held with the California Farm Bureau, the Association of California County Ag Commissioners, the California Cattlemen's Association and ranchers across the State.

We anticipate announcing a signup over the next couple of months when the regulations are published.

The new Farm Bill disaster assistance programs that are applicable to drought recovery include:

- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program,
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), and the
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

The maximum disaster payment available to a producer under these programs is limited to a combined \$100,000, excluding the Tree Assistance Program. An additional \$100,000 per producer is available under TAP.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) Program

As the successor to the ad hoc crop disaster programs previously available, SURE is available to eligible crop producers in counties where a qualifying natural disaster declaration is made by the Secretary of Agriculture. Producers can also qualify if they experience a greater than 50 percent loss in production because of weather. To qualify for SURE payments, either NAP coverage or crop insurance is required for all crops the producer grows.

Payments under SURE are equal to 60 percent of the difference between the Disaster Program Guarantee for all crops and the total farm revenue for all crops. The Disaster Program Guarantee cannot exceed 90 percent of the expected revenue for the farm. Note also that SURE payments will not be made for more than a year after the crop is harvested because the 2008 Farm Bill requires calculations for the entire operation, including national average market price and program data that become available in the following year.

For the purpose of drought loss, “prevented planting” for annual crops is considered a loss under SURE. Crop damage to trees, orchards and vines also qualifies as a loss.

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)

The LFP is the new successor to the previous Livestock Compensation Program and provides assistance for forage losses due to drought and fire on public managed land. This program will benefit a number of California’s livestock producers. *(See Exhibits 2 and 3, 2008 and 2009 Drought Monitor Severity Maps - California.)*

Producers qualify for this program if the Drought Monitor designates their county as severe (D2), extreme (D3) or exceptional (D4). The Drought Monitor is a national service provided through the cooperation of USDA, the National Drought Mitigation Center, the Department of Commerce and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

To qualify for the first level of assistance, a county has to be at least at a D2 severity level on the US Drought Monitor for eight consecutive weeks. If the severity level on the Drought Monitor increases to extreme levels of D3 or exceptional levels of D4, additional payments are provided.

A disaster declaration is not required for LFP, but eligible producers are required to have purchased NAP or crop insurance for their grazed land.

In California, for 2008, 33 counties qualify for payments at the severe level (D2) and 18 counties qualify for larger payments at the extreme level (D3).

So far in 2009, 24 counties qualify for payments at the severe level (D2) and 23 counties qualify for larger payments at the extreme level (D3).

Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

Orchardists and nursery tree growers may receive cost-share benefits under the TAP if their tree losses due to a natural disaster exceed 15 percent. In addition, bushes, vines and nursery trees for commercial sale are eligible. Once again, NAP or crop insurance is required for program eligibility. The program provides for partial reimbursement of costs for replanting, pruning, debris removal and salvage efforts. The severity of the multi-year drought in California may prompt TAP payments in California for 2009.

Other programs included in the 2008 Farm Bill that are important to California's farmers and ranchers faced with drought prospects include the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), the Emergency Loan Program (EM) and Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

As mentioned earlier, NAP is important in California where so many crops are produced that are ineligible under the RMA guidelines for crop insurance. NAP goes into effect when disasters create low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs. Crops eligible for NAP coverage include crops grown for food, including food for livestock; rangeland forage; crops grown for fiber, such as cotton and flax; crops grown under a controlled environment, such as mushrooms and floriculture; specialty crops, such as honey and maple sap; value-loss crops, such as aquaculture; Christmas trees; ginseng; ornamental nursery and turf grass sod; and seed crops where the propagation stock is produced for sale as seed stock for other eligible NAP crop production.

Eligible producers must apply for NAP coverage of crops in a specific timeframe and pay the applicable service fees at their local FSA office. Limited resource and socially-disadvantaged producers may request a waiver of service fees.

When a NAP crop or planting is affected by a natural disaster such as drought, producers must notify their local FSA office and complete the "notice of loss" portion of the application. They must also complete the application within 15 calendar days of the natural disaster occurrence, the final planting date if planting was prevented by the natural disaster, or the date damage to the crop or loss of production became apparent. The natural disaster must have either reduced the expected production of the crop by more than 50 percent, or prevented the producer from planting more than 35 percent of the intended crop acreage. NAP covers the amount of loss greater than 50 percent of the expected production based on the approved yield and reported acreage.

In 2008 and 2009, FSA anticipates NAP payments will be made in all California counties. Totals to date for 2008 payments are more than \$8.5 million crop insurance indemnities.

Emergency Loan Program

The FSA's Emergency Loan Program (EM) provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought and other disasters. EM loans may be used to restore or replace essential property; pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; pay essential family living expenses; reorganize the farming operation; and refinance certain debts. EM loans may be made to producers who own or operate land located in a county declared a Presidential disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as a disaster area. Participants must be established family farm operators and U.S. citizens or permanent residents and have sufficient farming or ranching experience. They must have suffered at least a 30 percent loss in crop production or a physical loss to livestock, livestock products, real estate or chattel property. They must have an acceptable credit history, must be unable to receive credit from commercial sources, must provide collateral to secure the loan; and show that they have repayment ability.

Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses to a maximum amount of \$500,000. Applications for EM loans must be received within eight months of the county's disaster designation date. Emergency loans are a temporary source of credit, and borrowers are reviewed periodically to determine whether they can return to commercial credit.

In FY 2006, there were 12 EM loans authorized in California for \$1,791,000.

In FY 2007, there were 12 EM loans authorized in California for \$1,989,000.

In FY 2008, there were 12 EM loans authorized in California for \$1,724,590, and so far in FY 2009, the state has five EM loans for \$539,960.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

The ECP is a cropland restoration program, but it can also be used to provide temporary measures or practices to supply emergency water for livestock due to a drought related problem. Cost-sharing of up to 75 percent is provided to eligible ranchers to install pipelines, watering tanks or troughs. Assistance can also be provided for livestock wells or the deepening of existing livestock wells at a 50-percent cost-share rate.

Due to the severe drought conditions in the northern California coast, \$131,000 has been provided to Mendocino and Lake County for emergency water development under ECP in 2009. Five more counties are currently at the D4 severity level on the US Drought Monitor.

Future for Forests

Federal Drought Action Team

As mentioned earlier, in February, the Federal Drought Action Team was activated by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior. The Forest Service has cooperated with this team in the past with water quality, grazing and fire impacts. The Agency is looking forward to working closely with other federal and state agencies in the future.

Climate Change

Climate change will exacerbate the impact of major stressors on National Forest System (NFS) ecosystems^[1]. Wildfires, non-native and native invasive species, and extreme weather events—including drought—are among the most critical stressors that climate change will amplify within NFS ecosystems. Reduced snowpack, earlier snowmelt, and altered hydrology associated with warmer temperatures and altered precipitation patterns are expected to complicate water management, not only in California, but throughout the West, affecting the ecosystem goods and services that National Forests provide. Drought is emerging as a major management challenge, not only in California, but across the western United States.

Conclusion

Farmers and ranchers are familiar with FSA's programs and loans. We attempt to keep them informed about changes to the programs as they occur, especially at a time like this, when we are implementing a new Farm Bill. Because nearly two-thirds of all U.S. counties participate in a disaster designation as a primary or contiguous county in a given year, our producers know the process well. Still, we frequently remind them of the steps they must take to become eligible during a new designation.

USDA, FSA and the other agencies that deal directly with producers are fully aware of the need for quick and accurate response when disaster occurs. Likewise, we know our obligation to America's taxpayers, who entrust us with seeing that their money is spent wisely on agricultural programs that assure them of quality food, fiber, and an opportunity to improve our energy capacity.

¹ Joyce, L.A. et al. (2008) Chapter 3 National Forests in US Climate Change Science Program: Preliminary review of adaptation options for climate-sensitive ecosystems and resources. A Report by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. [Julius, S.H., J.M. West (eds.), J.S. Baron, L.A. Joyce, P. Kareiva, B.D. Keller, M.A. Palmer, C.H. Peterson, and J.M. Scott (Authors)]. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

The drought in California is a problem for the state's farmers and ranchers and it is a problem for our National Forests. But it also affects state residents as consumers who compete for water use. We cannot solve the water problem, so we provide the farmers and ranchers a safety net to protect them from any long-term threat to California's important agricultural capabilities. And we offer solutions to improve the quality of our forests. We monitor drought conditions in California and throughout the United States routinely to anticipate changes and to keep our employees informed of the potential threat.

Thank you for allowing me to share our Department of Agriculture perspective as you address this important issue. I am available to answer your questions now or at any time in the future.

EXHIBIT 1 - California Drought Designation by County



2008 Drought Disaster Counties

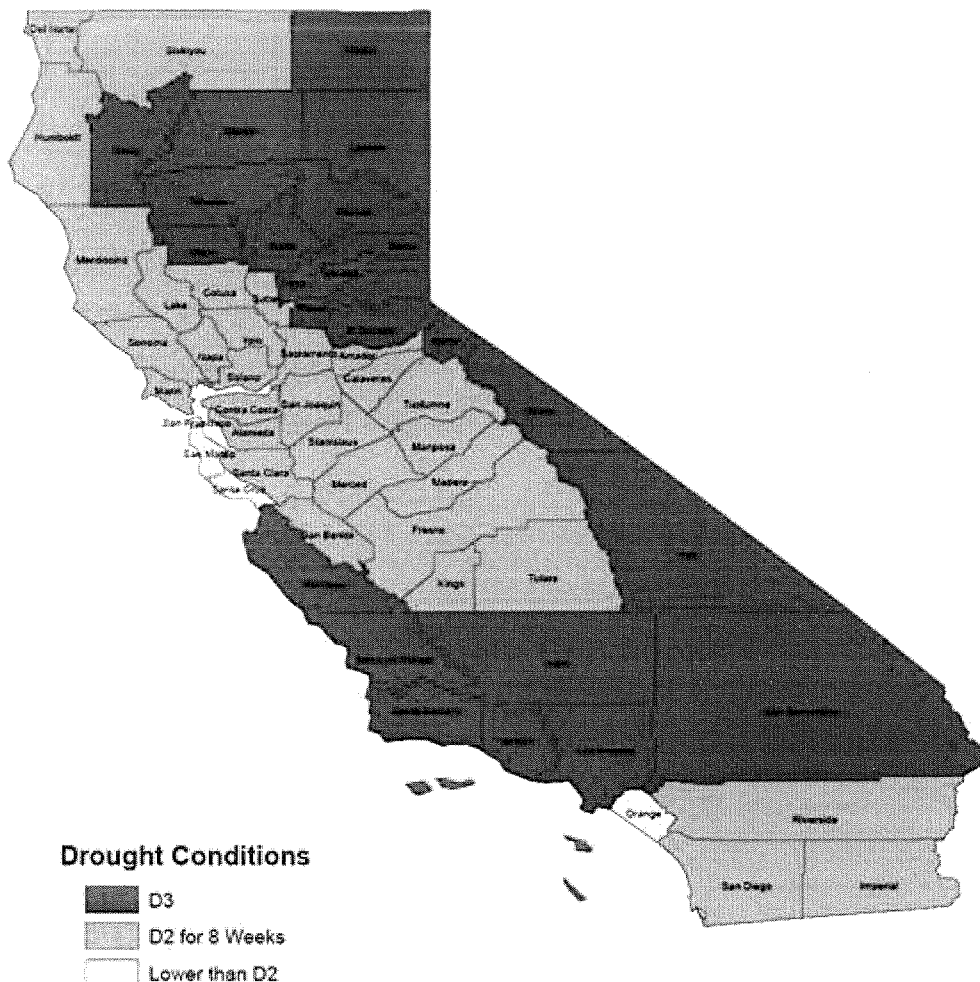


As of October 20, 2008

EXHIBIT 2 – 2008 Drought Monitor Severity Map - California



2008 Drought Conditions



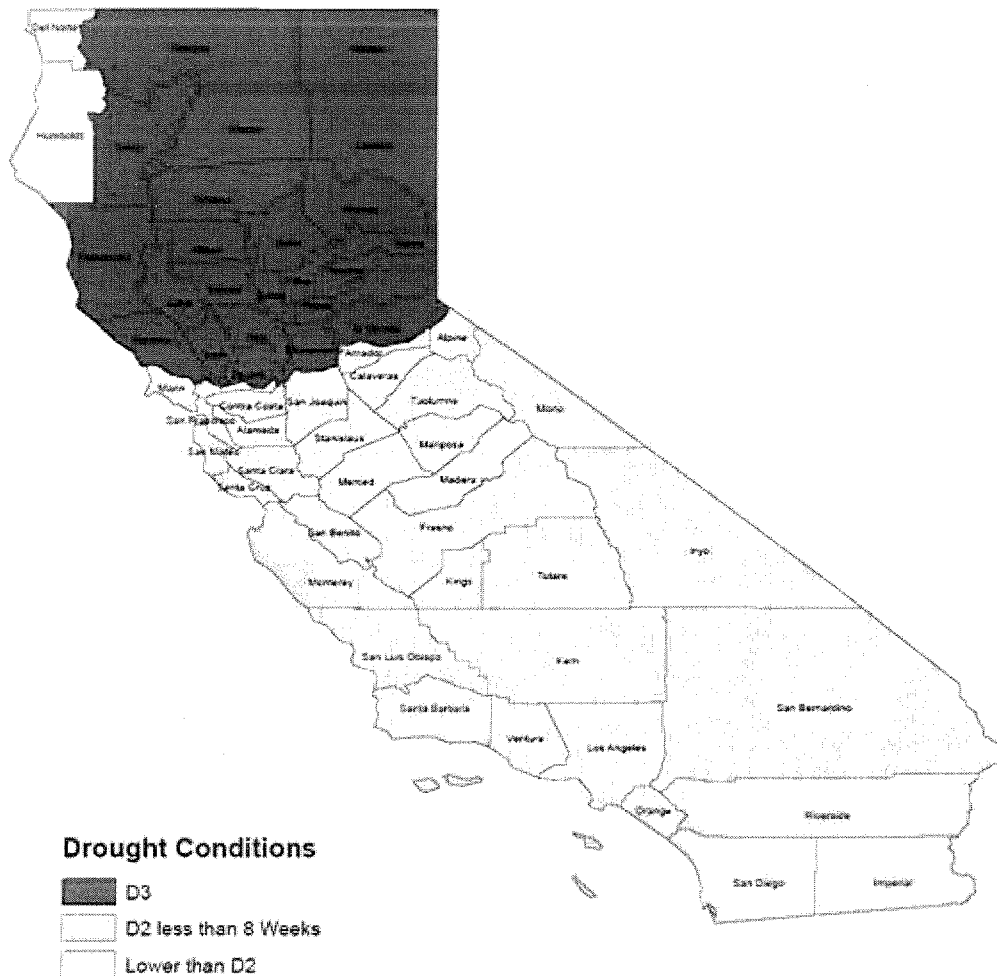
As of February 23, 2009



EXHIBIT 3 – 2009 Drought Monitor Severity Map – California



2009 Drought Conditions



As of February 23, 2009





01-23-09

Sec. Vilsack makes 48 appointments to key USDA posts

By Sara Wyant

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Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced 48 more names on Friday, filling key posts at USDA “effective immediately” in agencies ranging from the Farm Service Agency and the Foreign Agricultural Service to the Food and Nutrition Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. These 48 names follow the announcement earlier on Friday that Sec. Vilsack had officially named John Norris as his Chief of Staff and Carole Jett as Deputy Chief of Staff, confirming our report in the Jan. 21, 2009 issue of Agri-Pulse.

- Carolyn Cooksie, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS);
- Linda Treese, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA), FFAS
- Patricia Sheikh, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), FFAS
- Dennis Taitano, Acting Administrator, FSA
- Sandra Wood, Acting Deputy Administrator for Commodity Operations, FSA
- Candy Thompson, Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, FSA
- Chris Beyerhelm, Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs, FSA
- Robert Stephenson, Acting Deputy Administrator for Field Operations, FSA
- Suzanne Hale, Acting Administrator, FAS
- Robert Riemenschneider, Acting Associate Administrator, FAS
- William Murphy, Acting Administrator, RMA
- Timothy Witt, Acting Associate Administrator, RMA
- Tim O’Connor, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
- Enrique Gomez, Acting Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
- Ron Vogel, Acting Associate Administrator, FNS
- Robert Post, Acting Director, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
- Ron Hicks, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety
- Al Almanza, Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service

- Cindy Smith, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP)
- Kevin Shea, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for MRP
- David Shipman, Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service
- Kevin Shea, Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- Alan Christian, Acting Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration
- Ann Bartuska, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE)
- Hank Kashdan, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Forest Service, NRE
- Doug Lawrence, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), NRE
- David White, Acting Chief, NRCS
- Leonard Jordan, Acting Regional Assistant Chief, Eastern Region, NRCS
- Diane Gelburd, Acting Regional Assistant Chief, Central Region, NRCS
- Ginger Murphy, Acting Regional Assistant Chief, Western Region, NRCS
- Katherine Smith, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics
- Colien Hefferan, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics
- Bill Hagy, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development
- Sherie Hinton Henry, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development
- Pat Fiala, Acting Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service
- Chris Alsop, Acting Administrator, Rural Housing Service
- Jim Newby, Acting Administrator, Rural Utilities Service
- Russ Ashworth, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration
- Russ Ashworth, Acting Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
- Robin Heard, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
- Christine Sarcone, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
- Doug Crandall, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
- Jon Holladay, Acting Chief Financial Officer
- James Michael Kelly, Acting General Counsel
- W. Scott Steele, Director, Office of Budget and Program Analysis
- Joseph Glauber, Chief Economist
- Christopher L. Smith, Acting Chief Information Officer
- Larry Quinn, Acting Director, Office of Communications
- Jim Brownlee, Acting Deputy Director, Office of Communications
- Jim Brownlee, Acting Press Secretary, Office of Communications.

The USDA appointments decision notes that “This list includes several officials who have been appointed to and serve permanently in the positions identified. These designations and delegations of authority are effective immediately, and shall continue in effect for each designee either until withdrawn or until a successor is appointed to perform the functions of the office.”



Candy Thompson

Director, Production, Emergencies, and Compliance Division at USDA-FSA
Washington D. C. Metro Area | Government Administration

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Candy Thompson's Overview

Current	Director, Production, Emergencies, and Compliance Division at USDA-FSA
Past	Director, Price Support Division at USDA-FSA Asst to Deputy Administrator, Commodity Operations at Farm Service Agency
Education	American University Missouri State University
Connections	247 connections
Websites	Company Website

Candy Thompson's Experience

Director, Production, Emergencies, and Compliance Division USDA-FSA

Government Agency, 10,001+ employees; Government Administration industry
June 2009 – Present (3 years 1 month)

Director, Price Support Division

USDA-FSA

Government Agency, 10,001+ employees; Government Administration industry
January 2008 – June 2009 (1 year 6 months)

Asst to Deputy Administrator, Commodity Operations

Farm Service Agency

Government Agency, 10,001+ employees; Government Administration industry
January 2001 – January 2008 (7 years 1 month)

Candy Thompson's Education

American University

Key Certificate, Public Policy Administration

2007 – 2008

Activities and Societies: 2010 member of AU's Key Executive Advisory Board.

Missouri State University

BS, Accounting

1976 – 1980

Candy Thompson's Additional Information

Websites:

- [Company Website](#)

Groups and
Associations:



AG CONNECT Expo



Agriculture



American University School of Public Affairs








DTN/The Progressive Farmer



Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association (FEIAA)

Federal Forum



Key Executive Leadership Programs

Senior Executives Association

USDA SES CDP Alumni

USDA SES CDP Cohort V

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JOHANN'S NAMES KEPPEY ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FARM SERVICE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2006 - Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns today announced the appointment of Glen Keppy to the post of associate administrator for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). As associate administrator, Keppy will oversee management of FSA farm and farm loan programs and commodity operations activities.

"Glen's expertise in agriculture will make him a valuable member of the USDA team," said Johanns. "I look forward to welcoming Glen, a fellow Iowa native, and I'm confident he will advance USDA's commitment of service to our farmers and ranchers."

Keppy and his family have owned and operated a diversified crop and livestock family farm in eastern Iowa for 34-years. He brings both a local as well as international perspective to FSA, having traveled extensively to promote U.S. agricultural exports in various foreign markets.

Keppy also has extensive experience from service on numerous boards and committees including as chairman of National Pork Board's Foreign Trade Commission; President of the National Pork Producers Association; vice chairman of the Iowa Ag Value Committee and the board of directors of the U.S. Meat Export Federation. He has also received the Iowa Farm Bureau's Distinguished Service Award.

Keppy and his wife, Jean, along with sons, Chad and Neal, operated their farm in Iowa. Another son, Paul, attends Iowa State University and daughter Shelley works with a pediatric group in Iowa City.

#



Tom Harkin Iowa's Senator

Harkin Congratulates Glen Keppy on Appointment to USDA Associate Administrator for Farm Service Agency



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April 21, 2006

Harkin Congratulates Glen Keppy on Appointment to USDA Associate Administrator for Farm Service Agency

Secretary Mike Johanns announced the appointment of Iowan Glen Keppy today to be Associate Administrator for the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA). Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today released the following statement:

"I congratulate Glen Keppy from Scott County on his appointment to a senior position at USDA's Farm Service Agency. I've known Glen for quite some time and he is well respected in Iowa and the state and national farm community, having served as President of the National Pork Producers Council and on the board of directors of the multi-state agricultural cooperative Cenex-Harvest State. His knowledge and experience in agriculture and in agricultural issues should serve producers and all Americans well at FSA."

Education

Disabilities

Health & Wellness



Date Posted: Apr. 21 2006

CHS Congratulates Keppy on USDA Appointment

St. Paul, MN--**CHS Inc.**, one of the nation's leading energy and grain-based foods companies, Apr. 21 congratulated veteran board member **Glen Keppy** on his appointment by **President Bush** as assistant administrator for the **Farm Service Agency** within the **U.S. Department of Agriculture**.

"CHS congratulates Glen on this tremendous opportunity to extend his deep commitment to serving agriculture," CHS Chairman **Michael Toelle** said.

"His extensive experience and expertise will serve our nation well in this new role."

In his new position, Keppy will be responsible for a wide range of programs affecting agriculture producers including crop insurance, risk management, the Conservation Reserve Program and implementation of the Farm Bill.

Keppy, a Davenport, IA producer and a CHS director since 1999, will be submitting his resignation from the CHS Board in the coming weeks.

At that time the CHS Board will determine how to address that vacancy.

Keppy's current term expires at the company's December 2008 annual meeting.

Keppy currently represents CHS members in Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas.

See Related Websites/Articles:

- CHS



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Keppy Hopes to Make a Difference at FSA

WASHINGTON, D.C. - A little over a month ago, Glen Keppy was "planting corn, tending to livestock and mowing the lawn" on the family farm in Iowa. Now he's serving as FSA's new associate administrator for programs, living in a high-rise apartment amidst the hustle and bustle of Washington, D.C. and working inside the walls of USDA headquarters.

"It's our first real move since I was in college," said Keppy. "My wife and I are enjoying it."

Keppy admits that the dizzying array of government acronyms was a bit intimidating at first. But overall, the Iowa native is happy in his new position.

"There's a good team of individuals here in D.C. at FSA," said Keppy. "Every half hour, I'm dealing with a new issue. The number of issues we deal with is astounding. But, there's always someone who can get the answers you need."

Keppy adds that he recently had the pleasure of meeting FSA state executive directors and other employees. He says he is proud of FSA employees, especially those in his home state of Iowa.

One thing is certain. Keppy has a lot of knowledge and experience in the fields of agriculture. The Iowan grew up on a farm and, for most of his life, has not lived far from the family operation. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural technology from the University of Wisconsin - Platteville where he played football. After college, he was immediately drafted into the National Football League (NFL). Keppy spent the next two-and-a-half years playing defense for the Pittsburgh Steelers, Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers.

Keppy says the NFL experience was a great opportunity, but his "ultimate goal was to be a pig farmer. My love was agriculture, and I wanted to get back to the farm."

The burly Mid-Westerner did just that. He went to work growing a farming operation and raising a family of three sons and a daughter. Over the past three decades, Keppy and his wife have built a successful grain and livestock operation. Two of his sons have since taken over the business, which today includes 2,000 acres of corn, alfalfa, soybeans, beef cattle, sheep and pigs.

Whether on the football field or the corn field, Keppy did not allow success to distract him from what's important in life. Community involvement is a significant part of his life.

"For example, I would take the baby pigs and lambs into local nursing homes for the residents to enjoy," said Keppy.

He is also a Rotary Club member and provides school tours on his farm in an effort to improve the image of agriculture.

A past president of the National Pork Producers Association, Keppy believes that today's agriculture must be viewed from a global perspective. To help American producers be more competitive in the global marketplace, he has worked to promote American products, such as soybeans and pork, overseas. During his career, he was a member of the National Pork Board's Foreign Trade Commission and on the board of directors of the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

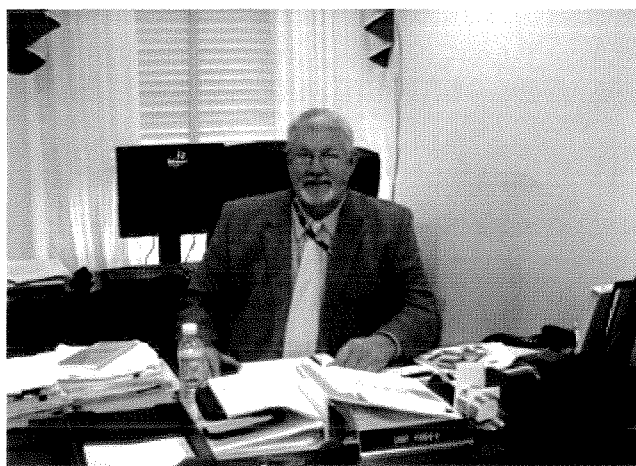
But to compete in the global market, American producers must have competitive businesses. That's where FSA plays a key role and where Keppy hopes to have an impact. The associate administrator for farm programs says his major goals are to help strengthen the delivery of FSA programs and the impact those programs have on American agriculture.

What can FSA employees expect to see from Keppy as a leader? He says he is a good listener, a consensus builder and a team builder. He also encourages FSA employees to provide input on the many issues facing the agency - even if the input is constructive criticism.

"Communication is so important," said Keppy. "I encourage dialogue on points. I am all for making FSA a better organization."

"I've spent my whole life trying to do things that will make a difference for future generations," said Keppy. "I'd like to think that I bring common sense and practical experience to the job. I believe I can make a difference here in D.C."

Shortly after becoming FSA's associate administrator for programs, Glen Keppy said, 'I'd like to think that I bring common sense and practical experience to the job. I believe I can make a difference here in D.C.' [View Photo](#)



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Glen Keppy

Aliases and Other Names:

Bio

[\[edit\]](#)

Glen Keppy

Associate Administrator for Programs

Glen Keppy

Glen L. Keppy is the Associate Administrator for Programs for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). As the Associate Administrator for Programs, Mr. Keppy is responsible for supervising and administering farm commodity programs, farm loans, conservation programs, and disaster assistance.

Mr. Keppy, a third-generation family farmer, has owned and operated a diversified crop and livestock family farm in eastern Iowa for more than three decades. His

twin sons also help to operate the family farm.

A past president of the National Pork Producers Council, Keppy encourages producers to view agriculture from a global perspective. Throughout his agricultural career, Mr. Keppy has promoted U.S. agricultural products both domestically and internationally to help American producers become more competitive in the global marketplace. In 1989, Mr. Keppy was one of six people chosen to travel to China with USDA's Agricultural Research Service to select Chinese pigs for a Chinese pig research project.

Active in a variety of agricultural projects, environmental working groups and civic organizations, Mr. Keppy has served on the executive committee and was the treasurer of the U.S. Meat Export Federation. He also served on the Cenex Harvest States Cooperatives Board of Directors and the Federal Reserve Bank Advisory Committee.

Prior to his current position, Mr. Keppy was a member of and actively involved in the National Corn Growers Association; American Soybean Association; American Farm Bureau at the county, state and national levels; and was a presidential appointee advising the Small Business Administration.

Throughout his career, Mr. Keppy has received recognition and numerous distinguished awards for his participation in and membership of community organizations and committees. In the late 1990s, he received the Iowa Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award and was awarded the Leadership Award from the Des Moines Register newspaper.

Mr. Keppy received a bachelor's degree in agricultural technology from the University of Wisconsin – Platteville, where he played football. After college, he played defense for the Pittsburgh Steelers, Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers and later returned to his first love – agriculture. Mr. Keppy and his wife Jean, live in Arlington, Virginia, and have four children and two grandchildren.

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Lasseter to head Farm Service Agency

Fri, 2005-10-28 08:41

[Delta Farm Press](#)

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has appointed Teresa Coarsey Lasseter, a former county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service director in Georgia, as administrator of the Farm Service Agency, the ASCS' successor organization.

"Teresa Lasseter's experience at the local, state and federal levels, combined with her personal involvement with agriculture, provide her with tremendous insight and an ability to lead the Farm Service Agency into the future," said Johanns. "Her commitment to service fits perfectly with the agency's long tradition of serving America's farmers and ranchers."

She replaces FSA Administrator James Little, who resigned after USDA announced it was beginning a "modernization" program that could result in the closure or consolidation of 713 of FSA's 2,355 county offices. USDA now says the plan will not be implemented.

Johanns announced the appointment prior to hosting the Georgia Farm Bill Forum, the 18th hosted by Johanns and the 34th in a series of farm policy listening sessions, at the Sunbelt Expo in Moultrie, Ga.

As FSA administrator, Lasseter will oversee farm programs, farm loans, commodity operations, conservation programs, disaster assistance and field operations at FSA offices in all 50 states.

A Georgia native, Lasseter served at FSA from 2001 to 2003, first as state executive director in Georgia and later as associate administrator for farm programs in Washington.

She served as executive director of the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority from 1993 to 1999 and also worked for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, FSA's predecessor, in several positions from 1977 to 1993, culminating as a county executive director for Lee County.

Lasseter was the recipient of the USDA's Unsung Hero Award and the Athena Award, and she received the Farm Service Agency Administrator's Award for outstanding work specifically for implementing the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, the 2002 farm bill.

Her community service includes serving in leadership roles with the Tifton Rotary Club, Tift County American Cancer Society, and Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce. Lasseter and her husband, Willard, have two children.

Lasseter is an honor graduate from the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College with an associate degree in business administration.

e-mail: flaws@primediabusiness.com

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 Volume 64 No. 6
 November - December 2005

Printable version

Profile Plus - More About: Teresa Lasseter

When **Teresa Lasseter** was nine years old she got her first paying job stringing tobacco on a wooden stick to be hung in the barn to dry. It is cumbersome, sticky work, but just the first in a series of farm jobs she would fill while growing up in rural Brookfield, Ga. The family grew peanuts, tobacco, cotton, and vegetables. But when she was 12, the family moved to nearby Tifton to take advantage of the public school system. At that point her father changed their mix of crops to tomato and pepper plants grown from seed. From early April until June, she and her siblings would work after school pulling the plants, packing and shipping them north.

"My family has always been in agriculture," she said. Thus it was no real surprise that Lasseter's first job as a young adult was with the old Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service [now the Farm Service Agency] as a temporary employee working as a tobacco marketing recorder. From there began a string of promotions from program assistant, chief program assistant, county operations reviewer, to county executive director in Lee County, Ga. "It was just a natural fit for me, because from the first day I started working I just really enjoyed what I was doing."

She took a hiatus from the government to stay near home while her children were in high school. But she wasn't idle. She was appointed by the governor of Georgia to be director of the Georgia Agrirama, a living agricultural history museum.

Lasseter returned to government service in 2001 when she was named FSA state executive director for Georgia. Then in May 2002 she was chosen to be the agency's associate administrator for programs in Washington, DC. After implementation of the 2002 farm bill, Lasseter returned to Georgia in 2003 intent on helping her husband run their John Deere dealership. Instead the governor appointed her to the Board of the Georgia Ports Authority.

Because of her experience with FSA at the local, state, and federal levels, Secretary Mike Johanns asked her to serve as the administrator of the Farm Service Agency. Lasseter said, "We

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have so many services to deliver. We are charged with many different responsibilities on the local level. I still know employees and producers that I can call and say, 'You know, I hear that this program's not working. So tell me why it's not and tell me what you're faced with out there.' That's definitely an advantage."

In addition to her broad knowledge of FSA, she also displays a quick and friendly wit. Two weeks into the job she attended a meeting of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters. When one broadcaster teased that he might need a translator, referring to Lassester's Georgia accent, she replied, "You should be able to understand me. I speak agriculture."

- **Last Book Read:** *"John Adams"* by David McCullough
- **Last Movie Seen:** *"Sabrina"*
- **Hobbies:** Reading, traveling, gardening, walking
- **Favorite Weekend Breakfast:** "My casserole made with sausage, buttermilk, flour, eggs, bell peppers, and tomatoes."
- **Priorities In The Months Ahead:** "Serving our customers as timely and accurately as we can and to see what changes need to be made. We need to make sure we have a good business plan. Because I've been on both sides for so long, I can see it from the policy side as well as our customers."

--**Patricia Klintberg**

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New Hampshire Farm Service Agency News



Volume 3, Issue 4

December 2005

NH Farm Bill Listening Forum — A Success



Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr, Rural Development State Director Jolinda LaClair (seated), Farm Bill Forum Moderator Fred Kocher and FSA State Executive Director Robb Thomson

Despite a Nor'easter, more than 100 interested persons turned out for the USDA Farm Bill Listening Forum held in Manchester, New Hampshire on October 25, 2005. The forum was hosted by USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Thomas Dorr. This was Mr. Dorr's second visit to NH having addressed the 2002 annual meeting of the NH Farm Bureau.

Joining Under Secretary Dorr at the outset of the forum were Congressmen Charlie Bass and Jeb Bradley. They both stressed the importance of farm and forestry issues in their districts. Commissioner of Agriculture,

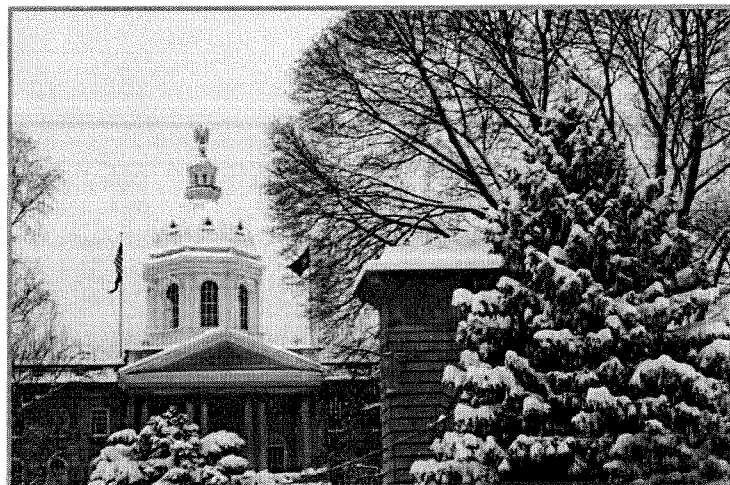
Markets and Food Steve Taylor provided his broad perspective of issues important to NH agricultural producers. He too joined Mr. Dorr on stage during the listening session.

Over 40 speakers lined up to make remarks regarding the next farm bill. The comment portion began with Jessica Nappo, FFA member Becky Davis, a former 4-H member, and Jamie Robertson, 4-H leader and dairy farmer, responding to the question "How should farm policy address any unintended consequences that discourage the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?"

The importance of maintaining a strong land grant Extension structure was cited by several speakers as critical to keeping NH producers competitive and in developing the next generation of successful farmers. Funding for land conservation, the value of forestry, and the importance of a safety net for dairy farmers were among some of the issues for which comments were provided.

Moderating the forum was Fred Kocher, a business program host for WMUR television. The forum began with the posting of the colors by the Manchester Central High School Color Guard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by 4-H members Charles Aznive, Cacia King and Morgan King. The National Anthem was sung by Kalie Cronin, a junior at Manchester Central High School.

Under Secretary Dorr noted that, since Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns kicked off this series of Farm Bill Listening Forums, there had been tremendous interest and participation all around the country.

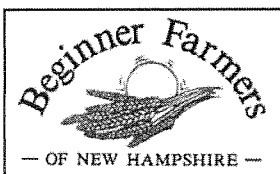


*New Hampshire embraces the holiday season
under a freshly fallen blanket of snow.
Peace and joy to all in the coming year.*

IN THIS ISSUE

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Small & Beginning Farmers Conference



NH FSA was pleased to be a co-sponsor for the 2nd annual Northern New England Small and Beginning Farmers Conference held in Waterville Valley at the Snowy Owl Inn. The two-day event was organized and sponsored by the North Country and Southern NH Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, and the Beginner Farmers of NH. FSA hosted an agency booth at the conference, and District

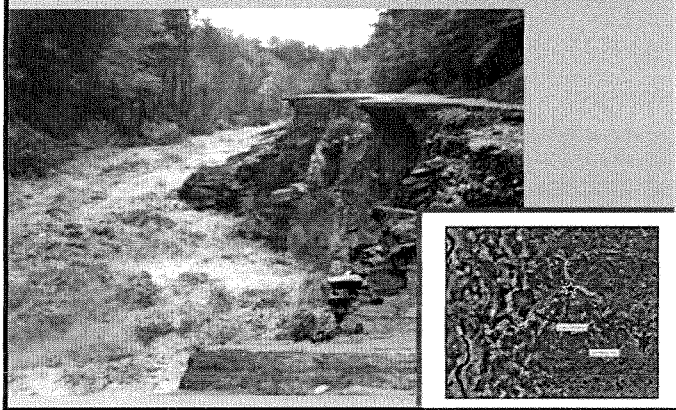
Director Ken Gustin provided financial program information during one of the workshops. The workshops included such diverse areas as buy local campaigns, small scale grain growing, programs for beginner farmers, on-farm apprenticeships and internship programs, getting a start on your farm's business plan, and starting a CSA (Cooperative Supported Agriculture).

Joel Salatin of Polyface Farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley was the keynote speaker. He also provided informative sessions on relationship marketing, a model farm and pasture based livestock. Mr. Salatin's experiences as a speaker and author of several books made him a huge success with attendees.

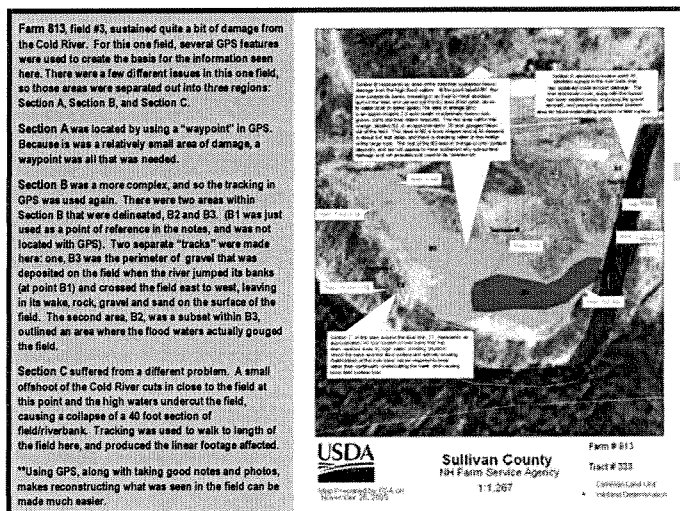
Employee Training

On December 6, all New Hampshire FSA employees gathered for training held in conjunction with the State Committee Meeting. Coos-Carroll County CED Irene Schmidt spoke to the group on her attendance at a public meeting sponsored by NH Health and Human Services personnel. The main focus of the October 21 forum was to prepare the public in the event of a pandemic brought on by Avian Influenza.

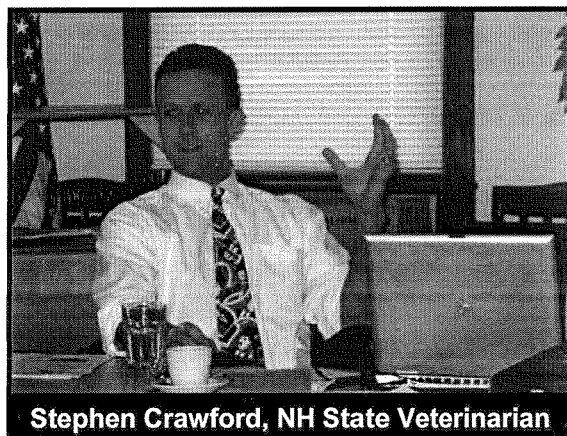
High water on Warren Brook, hours after the flood came through. Remains of Route 123 are in the upper right corner.



Our guest speaker was Dr. Stephen Crawford. He gave an informative overview of his extensive responsibilities as New Hampshire's State Veterinarian. Dr. Crawford described a litany of diseases for which the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food has to be ever vigilant. Of particular concern this year, were Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus. He also covered Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Food and Mouth Disease (FMD), and Avian Influenza. Dr. Crawford relocated here from California with his family. He took over as the state veterinarian in July replacing the retiring Dr. Clifford McGinnis.



Cheshire-Sullivan County Program Technician Gail Golec presented a slide show depicting the damage caused by the severe October flooding in the southwestern part of NH. Utilizing GPS and GIS technology, she showed the destruction to the farmland, homes, and infrastructure in that part of the state.



GIS Information Exchange

On November 29, representatives from New Hampshire Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD) and FSA met to discuss Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The meeting took place in Concord at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. The goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of what GIS data is available and where to find it. The exchange also provided the opportunity to become familiar with projects each agency is working on and their future GIS plans. Don Richard from NRCS and Marilyn Norton from FSA both gave presentations. Gary Beem from RD led a discussion on RD's plans for GIS and Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS).

Other GIS Conferences

Marilyn Norton represented FSA at the GIS Day – Geo-spatial Science Conference and College Fair held at the University of New Hampshire on November 16th. Hundreds of GIS users, presenters and vendors gathered at UNH for presentations and displays. While at the fair, Marilyn also took part in a NH ArcUser group meeting. The group meets 2 – 3 times a year to discuss new trends in GIS and local projects.

On November 8th, Marilyn attended a regional GIS User group conference in Danvers, MA hosted by ESRI, Environmental Systems Research Institute. The day was filled with presentations from vendors and local users. Topics covered included training from ESRI on new applications, GPS and ways in which local groups are using GIS.



The New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference was held this month at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester. Sponsored by Cooperative Extension, it included 24 educational sessions, covering major vegetable, berry and tree fruit crops as well as various special topics. FSA was well represented by employees over the three day conference at the Trade Show. Shown at left are Merrimack-Belknap County CED Kathleen Dole and Loan Specialist Michael Dragunas, from Massachusetts, who provided information on FSA's programs and services to conference attendees on day two of the conference.

FSA Administrator Appointed

In October, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns appointed Teresa Lasseter as the new Administrator of the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

"Teresa Lasseter's experience at the local, state and federal levels, combined with her personal involvement with agriculture, provide her with tremendous insight and an ability to lead the Farm Service Agency into the future," said Johanns. "Her commitment to service fits perfectly with the agency's long tradition of serving America's farmers and ranchers."

Teresa Lasseter is a Georgia native who served as the State Executive Director in that state from 2001 to 2003. She was later appointed as Associate Administrator for farm programs in Washington, D.C. Her extensive field experience with the agency includes positions as a Program Assistant, Chief Program Assistant, County Operations Reviewer and County Executive Director.



**Teresa Lasseter
Administrator**



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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.

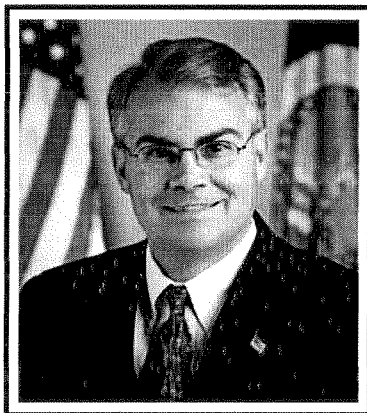
NRCS Recognizes FSA Employees' Efforts

It's always a good feeling when the agency you work for acknowledges your hard work, but it's particularly gratifying to be honored by people in another agency. Linda Grames and Irene Schmidt are two FSA employees who recently received awards for their extra efforts from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Coos-Carroll County Executive Director Irene Schmidt received an NRCS certificate for team effort. Irene assisted NRCS District Conservationist Nels Liljedahl with the paperwork involved in processing a large number of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) applications.

State Office Administrative Officer/Program Specialist Linda Grames was honored with a 2005 Outstanding Partner Award. Linda was cited for her contributions and support provided to the NRCS over the past year for EQIP.

Warm congratulations to both of you!



Steven Connelly, DAFO

Deputy Administrator for Field Operations Appointed

Steven Connelly is the new Deputy Administrator for Field Operations for the Farm Service Agency, effective December 6, 2005. Connelly replaced Doug Frago who has retired.

As Deputy Administrator for Field Operations, Connelly is responsible for developing and implementing personnel policies and operating guidelines for state and field FSA employees.

Prior to this appointment, the Maryland native served as FSA's Assistant Deputy Administrator for farm programs since June 2004. Before relocating to FSA's national office, he served as Maryland FSA State Executive Director starting in December 2001.

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The Voice Of Experience

Patty Rasmussen published February 2007

Teresa Lasseter brings real-world experience to her work with the Farm Service Agency.

Growing up on a farm in Tifton, Teresa Lasseter knew all about long hours. But who knew she'd continue to keep farmer's hours as administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA)?

"I get up at 5 a.m. I'm in my office by 7 and usually don't leave until close to 7 at night," Lasseter says. "But there's limited amount of time for political appointees to get things accomplished in Washington. My goal is to leave a better agency behind when I go."

Lasseter, 54, has spent most of her career serving in the FSA. She is the agency's first female administrator, and the first administrator to have worked her way up through the organization's ranks. "I began working with the FSA in one of their county offices, part time, in Tifton," she says. "I was just a young mother with two children looking for a temporary job for the summer."

A graduate of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Lasseter had worked for the Georgia Department of Transportation for several years out of college before landing that summer job with the FSA in 1977. She held a variety of positions while traveling the state and familiarizing herself with farm programs on the local level and entered the agency's management training program before stepping back in 1993 due to family concerns.

A political appointment from then-Gov. Zell Miller kept her closer to home. She was executive director of the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority in Tifton, remaining there until 1999. During her “break” from the FSA, Lasseter also chaired the Tifton Chamber of Commerce. She then relocated to Moultrie and settled in, not imagining the career changes yet to come.

President George W. Bush’s election in 2001 signaled Lasseter’s return to the FSA when the chief executive appointed her the (FSA) state executive director for Georgia. She served for one year until 2002 when she was appointed the Associate Administrator for Programs (in the FSA) and asked to move to Washington, DC.

Years of FSA experience served Lasseter well. “They wanted someone in that position who knew the agencies and programs,” she says. “Thirteen months later, once the rules and regulations [of the 2002 Farm Bill] were in place, I went back to Moultrie.”

But in August 2005 Lasseter was asked to interview for the administrator’s job. She became chief of the FSA in October 2005. Her work history in the agency was invaluable; an even greater benefit was growing up on a farm. “I have a different appreciation for farmers, ranchers and land owners,” she says. “They need to remain strong and viable. I consider my job to be a tremendous opportunity for public service.”

Knowing she has a limited amount of time to get things done, Lasseter wants to see more FSA reorganization. “Many of our programs have changed and work loads have shifted,” she says. “We need to consolidate more of our county offices, and staff them according to the work load.”

She says the agency also needs better training and tools for local staffs with one goal in mind: better service to customers. “Our customers are farmers, ranchers and land owners,” Lasseter says. “We must update our technology to service them more efficiently, quickly and accurately. Communication is vital. Many farmers want to do their FSA work online and we’re in the process of shifting programs to the Web. This saves farmers time and for them, especially, time is money.”

Lasseter says the job, answering legislators’ questions on Capitol Hill, meetings with the secretary of agriculture, and handling a budget of multiple billions, can be overwhelming but she thrives on the challenges. Her husband, Willard, remained in Georgia to run the family’s John Deere dealership, but her daughter, Autumn Veazy, is an attorney in Washington living with her mom in Arlington, Va. “It’s been great living with my daughter again,” says Lasseter, whose son, Zach, is an accountant in Tifton. “It’s the first time we’ve lived together since she was in high school.”

Knowing a new administration means new administrators, Lasseter gives herself two more years to accomplish her goals before returning to Georgia. “My work is rewarding, but I love Georgia,” she says. “It will be great to come home again.”



In the know: Teresa Lasseter

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Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer

Ed Schafer was sworn in as the 29th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 28, 2008.



Secretary Schafer brings a record as an innovative two-term governor of North Dakota to USDA along with extensive private sector experience as both an entrepreneur and a business executive.

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Schafer served as North Dakota's governor from 1992 to 2000 and made diversifying and expanding North Dakota's economy, reducing the cost of government and advancing agriculture his top priorities in office.

He worked to normalize trading relations with China and develop that nation as an export market for North Dakota farm products. He also led efforts to upgrade North Dakota's communications infrastructure and make high-speed voice and data networks available to farmers, ranchers and rural businesses.

To expand the state's job base, he encouraged the growth of value-added agricultural industries such as pasta and corn sweetener manufacturing.

As governor, Schafer managed a state workforce of 12,000 people, oversaw a budget of \$4.6 billion, and led the state's response to emergencies such as the severe floods that hit the Grand Forks area in 1997.

As chair of the Western Governors Association, Schafer led regional efforts to demonstrate how technology could improve the efficiency and lower the cost of delivering government services such as health benefits and food stamps. He also worked to make telemedicine more available and affordable in rural areas.

Schafer was elected chair of the Republican Governors

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Association in 2000 and that same year he co-founded and co-chaired the Governors Biotechnology Partnership to increase public understanding and support for the benefits of agricultural biotechnology.

He has had a lifelong interest in conservation and helped arrange the U.S. Forest Service's May 2007 purchase of the 5,200 acre Elkhorn ranch in North Dakota. The site was where Theodore Roosevelt had his home and operated a cattle ranch in the 1880s. It is near the preserved town of Medora-the state's leading tourist attraction.

Born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota, Schafer graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and earned an MBA from the University of Denver in 1970.

Secretary Schafer's grandfather immigrated to North Dakota from Denmark and homesteaded land in Hettinger County that he turned into a wheat and livestock farm. Schafer spent summers there while growing up. He helped his uncles with chores, tinkered with engines and learned firsthand about agriculture.

Before entering public life, Schafer was an executive with the Gold Seal Company in Bismarck, a successful marketer of nationally-known consumer products such as "Mr. Bubble" bubble bath, "Glass Wax" glass cleaner and "Snowy Bleach." The company had been founded by his father, Harold Schafer.

Secretary Schafer joined Gold Seal after he earned his MBA and held a series of management positions with the company before becoming president in 1978. Under his leadership, Gold Seal's sales climbed to \$50 million through acquisitions and new product introductions and its net worth tripled. It was sold in 1986. Schafer then went on to launch several new businesses, including a commercial real estate development company, a fish farm and a classic car dealership

After leaving office in 2000, he co-founded Extend America, a venture capital-backed company, to provide wireless voice and high-speed data services to commercial and residential customers in five rural Midwestern states.

He also served as a director of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation that oversees the historic town's operations and became active in leading several other nonprofit and citizens advocacy groups in North Dakota.

Secretary Schafer enjoys the outdoors and his hobbies include bicycling, hiking, scuba diving and restoring classic automobiles. He and his wife, Nancy, have four children; Tom Schafer, Ellie Schafer and Eric Jones and Kari Hammer; and eight grandchildren.

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Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack

Tom Vilsack was sworn in as the 30th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 21, 2009. Appointed by President Barack Obama, Vilsack received unanimous support for his confirmation by the U.S. Senate.



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Secretary Vilsack has served in the public sector at nearly every level of government, beginning as mayor of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa in 1987, and then as state senator in 1992. In 1998, he was the first Democrat elected Governor of Iowa in more than 30 years, an office he held for two terms.

As Secretary of Agriculture, Vilsack has been candid and direct about the challenges and opportunities facing USDA, and the importance of fulfilling the vast missions of the Department as a champion of rural America, a steward of the environment and a protector of our food supply.

Already, Agriculture Secretary, he has helped to implement the Recovery Act to create thousands of jobs, instituted reforms at USDA that will save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars and met with foreign governments to begin to establish food security across the globe. Vilsack has also made civil rights a top priority, taking definitive action to improve the Department's record and to move USDA into a new era as a model employer and premier service provider.

At USDA, Secretary Vilsack is working to ensure that America's forests and private working lands are conserved and restored to enhance water resources and help lead in the battle against climate change. USDA has implemented programs that create private sector jobs protecting and rehabilitating forests and wetlands.

Under Vilsack's leadership, USDA is working to promote a safe and nutritious food supply for all Americans and to end child hunger by 2015. Already, the Department has implemented an increase in SNAP, its main food assistance

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program, to benefit families in need with an additional \$80 per month. And for the first time ever, USDA is providing healthy fruits and vegetables to women and their infant children to encourage nutritious eating, combat the obesity epidemic, and prevent health problems down the road.

USDA is working to revitalize and create wealth in rural communities by expanding economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers and investing in infrastructure like houses, fire departments and health clinics that will stimulate local economies and create jobs. We are ensuring that America is the world leader in sustainable crop production, by conducting cutting edge agricultural research by maintaining an appropriate safety net for America's small and mid-sized farmers.

Throughout his time as Governor, Vilsack articulated a vision for making Iowa the Food Capital of the World and focusing on creating economic opportunity in rural communities and small towns through value-added agriculture. As Governor, he created the Iowa Food Policy Council to advance local food systems, enhance family farm profitability, and combat hunger and malnutrition. He led trade missions to foreign countries to market agricultural products and attended the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to push for expanded agricultural trade negotiations. In addition, he worked to support independent farmers and ranchers by enacting livestock market reform and mandatory price reporting legislation in 1999.

Vilsack was a leader among his colleagues. In addition to serving on the National Governors Association Executive Committee, he also served as chair of the Governors Ethanol Coalition, chair of the Democratic Governors Association, and founding member and chair of the Governors Biotechnology Partnership. As chair of the National Governors Association Committee on Natural Resources, Vilsack promoted private lands conservation and advanced the concept of tying farm payments to conservation commodities. Vilsack's national Private Lands, Public Benefits conference focused attention on the need to address conservation challenges by providing incentives to private landowners to implement conservation practices resulting in clean air, clean water, and enhanced wildlife habitat. He also created a comprehensive conservation program in Iowa to encourage and assist landowners in installing buffer strips, restoring wetlands, and rewarding good conservation practices.

During his tenure as Governor, Tom Vilsack initiated a comprehensive effort to increase economic opportunity and create good-paying jobs. He started Vision Iowa, a program to invest in cultural and recreational infrastructure throughout the state. A combination of venture capital initiatives created an entrepreneurial environment for innovation and new ideas to get started; and the Iowa Values Fund provided an economic growth strategy focused on creating and retaining jobs in targeted sectors including life sciences, financial services, and advanced manufacturing. Each of these initiatives created under Vilsack's administration contributed to the rebuilding of

local economies in small towns and rural communities across the state.

In addition to state economic investment, Vilsack's leadership and vision were instrumental in transforming Iowa to an energy state. His policies led to the construction of Iowa's first power facility in two decades and made Iowa a leader in alternative energy and renewable fuels. Vilsack created a regulatory and financial environment in Iowa for wind energy to develop to the point that it now makes up 5.5% of the state's generation, the largest percentage of any state. Iowa also emerged as a leader in the production of ethanol and biodiesel during his tenure.

Throughout his public service, Tom Vilsack has pursued an agenda dedicated to the principles of opportunity, responsibility, and security. He is recognized as an innovator on children's issues and education, economic and healthcare policy, and efforts to make government more efficient and accessible. Iowa is known for its strong K-12 education system in part due to Vilsack's initiatives. He developed aggressive early childhood programs, reduced class sizes, created a first-in-the-nation salary initiative to improve teacher quality and student achievement, and enacted a more rigorous high school curriculum. His leadership also led to Iowa becoming a national leader in health insurance coverage, with more than 90% of children covered.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Vilsack was born into an orphanage and adopted in 1951. He received a bachelor's degree from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, in 1972 and earned his law degree from Albany Law School in 1975. He moved to Mt. Pleasant - his wife, Christie's, hometown - where he practiced law. The Vilsacks have two adult sons, Jess and Doug, who both grew up in Mt. Pleasant, and a daughter-in-law, Kate, who's married to Jess.

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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

February 12, 2009

Dear USDA Employee:

It is an honor and a privilege for me to be asked by President Barack Obama to serve as Secretary of Agriculture, and I've appreciated the warm welcome I have received from the many USDA employees I have been able to meet thus far.

The breadth of the programs of the Department of Agriculture means that USDA will play an active role in the priorities of the Administration over the next 4 years. Every day, our programs touch almost every person in the country. We have a responsibility to make sure that these programs serve all of the people who need them and that they are managed in the most modern and efficient manner possible.

That presents us with great challenges, but also great opportunities. As a former mayor, State Senator, and Governor of Iowa, I was able to make advancements in rural economic opportunity, combating hunger and malnutrition, local food systems, family farm profitability, export opportunities, and livestock market reform. We did that by setting out strategic goals and empowering people to help us meet those goals. I intend to follow that same process at USDA, and I want you to know my priorities for the Department over the next 4 years. They include:

- *Promotion of a safe, sufficient, and nutritious food supply for all Americans and for people around the world.* We need a modern food safety system, and USDA will also play a key role in the public health debate. Our nutrition programs should strive to both alleviate hunger and prevent health care problems such as childhood obesity. President Obama has challenged us to eliminate childhood hunger by 2015, and as we move forward with reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Programs, we have the opportunity to emphasize the importance of healthful and nutritious eating.
- *Sustainable agricultural policies* that foster economic viability for small and mid-size farms and rural businesses, protect natural resources, and promote value-added agriculture.
- *National leadership in climate change mitigation and adaptation.* This will involve conservation and greater efficiency in energy use as well as new technologies and expanded opportunities in biofuels and renewable energy. We need to advance research and development and pursue opportunities to support the development of additional biofuels, wind power, and other renewable energy sources. I want to provide incentives for farmers and ranchers to use management practices that promote clean air, clean water, and wildlife habitat.

- *Building a modern workplace with a modern workforce.* We will focus on information technology and process improvements, led by an empowered and diverse workforce that reflects America and will bring the best ideas to the table.
- *Support for 21st century rural communities.* We will promote the expansion of modern infrastructure; broadband service; affordable, energy-efficient housing; expanded opportunities for small businesses; and improved quality of life through community facilities.


As we work to achieve these goals, we will be guided by the values that President Obama has outlined for his Administration: transparency, participation, and collaboration. We have an obligation to the public to make our programs as open as possible so that everyone can participate. We need to engage the public in conversation, discussion, and debate about policy decisions. In particular, we need to reach out to underserved constituencies and other groups who have been left out of the process, so that there is no question that the Department serves everyone and not just the special interests.

And you should not wait to be asked. Everyone has a personal responsibility to use his or her skills and expertise to modernize USDA systems and programs, improve policies, reach out to underserved constituencies, assure a discrimination-free workplace, and use Government resources wisely and efficiently. I hope you can look at every day that you come to work as an opportunity to make a difference—for the public and for your co-workers. It may be as seemingly small an act as turning off lights that aren't being used or finding other ways to reduce office expenses. For many people, you are the face of Government. How you act and interact goes a long way toward defining who participates in Government programs and policymaking and how the public views our stewardship.

Personal responsibility also means adhering to high ethical standards. One of my first acts as Secretary was to sign an Ethics Agreement in which I made a commitment to adhere to the high ethical standards articulated by President Obama. The President has clearly established the importance of ethical conduct in making Government credible and deserving of the public's confidence. I will expect no less from all USDA employees.

We have a big job ahead of us, and it will take a team effort to complete it. I am ready to lead the team and to support you in meeting our goals.

With best wishes,



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

SFGate.com**Officials: Obama selects Vilsack for ag post**

By MIKE GLOVER, Associated Press Writer

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

(12-16) 16:12 PST Des Moines, Iowa (AP) --

President-elect Barack Obama has selected former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack to become his agriculture secretary, according to Democratic officials familiar with the selection process.

Obama will announce the nomination of Vilsack on Wednesday, the officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the selection before the announcement. Obama also plans to announce his nomination of Colorado Sen. Ken Salazar as interior secretary at the same news conference, other Democratic officials said.

Vilsack will be the fourth former opponent of Obama in the campaign for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination to join his new administration. Others include Vice President-elect Joe Biden, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has been tapped for secretary of state, and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, selected to head the Commerce Department.

Vilsack announced his presidential candidacy in late 2006, positioning himself as a Washington outsider with heartland appeal, but he dropped out before the primaries because of an inability to raise money. He endorsed Clinton and campaigned actively for her in the long primary campaign against Obama. After Obama defeated Clinton, Vilsack endorsed him.

First elected governor in 1998, Vilsack, 58, carved out a reputation as a political centrist. He balanced Iowa's budget and resisted raising taxes, but he was willing to spend money on such priorities as education and health. He argued that pushing alternative energy sources was key to bolstering rural sections of the nation that are struggling economically and with vanishing populations.

Salazar will head a department that oversees oil and gas drilling on public lands and manages the nation's parks and wildlife refuges. Salazar is expected to try to balance the protection of natural resources while tapping the nation's energy potential — an approach Obama has said he wants.

Salazar co-sponsored a bill in Congress to create a new land conservation system under the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management for permanently protecting 26 million acres of national monuments, wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers. The legislation died during the lame-duck session of Congress after the November election.

The Colorado senator opposed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and objected to the Bush administration's efforts to lease Western lands for oil shale development. It will be up to the Obama administration whether to go ahead with leasing.

If Salazar is confirmed as interior secretary, Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter, a Democrat, will select a replacement to fill the last two years of his Senate term. Before being elected to the Senate in 2004, Salazar was Colorado's attorney general. He also headed Colorado's Natural Resources Department from 1990 through 1994.

(This version CORRECTS Vilsack's age to 58, not 56, and CORRECTS that he dropped out of race before primaries, not after the early primaries.)

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2008/12/16/national/w151450S83.DTL>



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**Ed Schafer**

Ed Schafer was sworn in as the 29th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 28, 2008. Secretary Schafer brings a record as an innovative two-term governor of North Dakota to USDA along with extensive private sector experience as both an entrepreneur and a business executive. Schafer served as North Dakota's governor from 1992 to 2000 and made diversifying and expanding North Dakota's economy, reducing the cost of government and advancing agriculture his top priorities in office.

**Mike Johanns**

Mike Johanns was sworn in as the 28th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 21, 2005. Secretary Johanns' strong agricultural roots stretch back to his childhood. He was born in Iowa and grew up doing chores on his family's dairy farm. As the son of a dairy farmer, he developed a deep respect for the land and the people who work it. He still describes himself as "a farmer's son with an intense passion for agriculture." That passion has been evident during Johanns' tenure as Secretary of Agriculture. Days after he took office, he began working with U.S. trading partners to reopen their markets to U.S. beef. Nearly 119 countries had closed their markets after a single finding of a BSE-infected cow in the U.S. in 2003. Within his first year, Johanns convinced nearly half that number to reopen their markets.

**Veneman, Ann M.**

Veneman was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate and sworn in as the 27th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on January 20, 2001. A lawyer and daughter of peach farmers, Veneman served as California's agriculture secretary from 1995 to 1999. From 1991 to 1993, Veneman was Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. From 1989 to 1991, Veneman served as Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs. She joined the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service in 1986 and served as

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Associate Administrator until 1989. Veneman was actively involved in the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, NAFTA, and the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement. Raised in Modesto, California, Veneman earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California at Davis, and a master's degree in public policy from the University of California at Berkeley, and a juris doctorate degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law.



Glickman, Daniel Robert.

Glickman was sworn in as the 26th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on March 30, 1995. Prior to his confirmation, Glickman served in the United States House of Representatives for 18 years where he represented Kansas' 4th Congressional District. Glickman brought to the Cabinet post experience as a member of the House Agriculture Committee, including six years as chairman of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and its predecessor, the Subcommittee on Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains. He contributed to the Farm Bills of 1977, 1981, 1985 and 1990. Prior to being elected to Congress in 1976, Glickman served as President of the Wichita, Kansas, School Board; was a partner in the law firm of Sargent, Klenda and Glickman; and served as a trial attorney for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Glickman received his B.A. in history from the University of Michigan and his law degree from the George Washington University. He served until January 19, 2001.



Espy, Alphonso Michael.

Born in Yazoo, Mississippi, on November 30, 1953, Espy graduated from Howard University in 1975 and received a law degree from Santa Clara Law School, California, in 1978. Then, he joined the Central Mississippi Legal Services as managing attorney. From 1980 to 1984, he served as assistant secretary for public lands in Mississippi. In 1984 and 1985, he was assistant attorney general for consumer protection in Mississippi. Espy was first elected to Congress in 1986 and served on the Agriculture and Budget Committees. Within these committees, he served on several task forces, including the Natural Resources' Community and Economic Development, the Lower Mississippi Delta Caucus, and the Select Committee on Hunger's Domestic Hunger Task Force. Espy was appointed Secretary of Agriculture on January 22, 1993, and is the first person of African American descent to hold the office. He served until December 31, 1994.



Madigan, Edward Rell.

Born in Lincoln, Illinois, on January 13, 1936, he graduated from Lincoln College in Illinois in 1956. Between 1955 to 1973, he owned and operated the Yellow Lincoln Cab Company. From 1966 to 1972, he was a member of the Illinois House of Representatives. In 1972, he was elected to the U.S. Congress where he served on the Energy and Commerce Committees. He

served as the ranking Republican on the Agricultural Committee from 1983 to 1991. In 1986, Madigan was chosen as Chief Deputy Whip of the Republican Party. Madigan was appointed as the Secretary of Agriculture and assumed office on March 12, 1991. Madigan died December 7, 1994.



Yeutter, Clayton Keith.

Born in Eustis, Nebraska, December 10, 1930, he earned his B.S. in animal husbandry from the University of Nebraska in 1952, and served in the Air Force for five years. He earned his law degree in 1963, and in 1966, his Ph.D. in agricultural economics, from the University of Nebraska. Yeutter started his career in agriculture as a farmer and a cattle feeder in 1957. From 1960 to 1966 he served on the staff of the University of Nebraska. From 1966 to 1968 he was a member of the Nebraska governor's staff. In 1968 and 1970, he headed the University of Nebraska's mission to Colombia. In 1970 and 1971, he was the USDA Administrator for Consumer and Marketing Service and, on January 24, 1973, he became Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Consumer Services. On March 13, 1974 he was appointed Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs and remained in that position until June 19, 1975. Between 1975-1977 he served as deputy special trade representative. From 1977 to 1978 Yeutter was a senior partner in the Nebraska law firm of Nelson, Harding, Yeutter, & Leonard. In 1978 he became president of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. In July 1985 President Reagan appointed Yeutter U.S. Trade Representative. On February 16, 1989, Yeutter was sworn in as the Secretary of Agriculture, serving until March 1, 1991. Yeutter later served as Chairman of the Republican National Committee.



Lyng, Richard Edmund.

Born in San Francisco on June 29, 1918. He graduated from Notre Dame University in 1940. He was president of the Ed J. Lyng Company, a family seed and bean production and processing firm from 1949 to 1967. In 1967, he was appointed the chief deputy director of the California State Department of Agriculture. From March 3, 1969, to January 23, 1973, Lyng was the USDA Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Consumer Services. From 1973 to 1979, he served as President of the American Meat Institute. From February 5, 1981, until January 18, 1985, he served as USDA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. In 1985 Lyng along with William Leshner formed Lyng and Leshner Inc., an agricultural consulting firm in Washington D.C. On February 22, 1986, he was appointed Secretary of Agriculture, serving until January 20, 1989.

Block, John Rusling.

Born on February 15, 1935, in Gilson, Illinois. In 1957, he graduated from West Point, and served three years in the Army. In 1960, he returned to



his family farm during which it expanded from 312 to 3000 acres. In 1977, he was appointed Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Illinois. From January 23, 1981 to February 14, 1986 he served as Secretary of Agriculture. After leaving USDA, Block became the president of the National - American Wholesale Grocers' Association based in Washington D.C.



Bergland, Robert Selmer.

Bergland was born in Roseau, Minnesota, on July 22, 1938. He studied agriculture at the University of Minnesota in a two year program. Bergland owns a 600 acre farm in Minnesota. He worked in USDA for Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (1963 - 1968). In 1970, he was elected to his first of four terms in Congress as a representative from Minnesota. In Congress he served on the House Committee on Agriculture's subcommittees for Conservation and Credit, and Livestock, Grains, Dairy, and Poultry. He served as Secretary of Agriculture from January 23, 1977, to January 20, 1981.

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NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - FARM SERVICE AGENCY

2008 FSA Administrator's Awards

By Bill Schmalfeldt, Writer-Editor, FSA Public Affairs

A sizeable crowd turned out on the first hot, muggy afternoon of June to be on hand for the 2008 FSA Administrator Awards for Service to Agriculture.

The bright sunlight shone through the glass ceiling of the Whitten Building patio June 5 as FSA Administrator Teresa Lasseter congratulated the 25 individuals and teams receiving this year's accolades.

"This is one of my favorite duties every year, to be here, to congratulate you, to shake your hands, and to have the chance to tell you, face to face, how much I appreciate everything you do for the agency, for USDA, and for the agricultural producers of America," Lasseter said.

Also on hand were USDA Chief of Staff Dale Moore and USDA Deputy Undersecretary Floyd Gaibler, who thanked the award winners for their dedication.

Gaibler said that agricultural producers may not be aware of all the times FSA employees have to go the extra mile to serve their needs. "They count on you to be there, whether you're in a county office or at the national headquarters here in D.C. And you never fail them," he said.

FSA Associate Administrator for Programs Glen Keppy served as Master of Ceremonies, introducing the teams and individuals honored in each category: Civil Rights Leadership, Excellence in Program Support, Excellence in Leadership and Management, Outstanding Team Accomplishment, Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives, Heroism and Emergency Response, and the Newcomer Award.

Civil Rights Leadership

For supporting workforce diversity through the continued use of the various Student Employment Programs: Lolla Smith, Human Resources Division/Employee Programs Branch.

For supporting the USDA mission of diversity through the County Committee system: the Gooding/Camas County, Idaho, FSA Office Staff and Committee. Including, Marty Beadz, Harold Boggs, Jr., Wesley Fields, Mariann Kramer, Linda Lemmon, Sandra Miller, Jilene Moore and Mike Sabala.

Excellence in Program Support

For performance "far exceeding the standards of the position in an understaffed office": April MacDonald, Economic and Policy Analysis (EPAS).

For providing excellent program support to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) during the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) signup and planning period: Kathy Modin, Pierce County, Wash., FSA Office.

For superior performance of assigned program duties while assisting the County Executive Director and training of new employees: Pamela Reese, Tioga County, Pa., FSA Office.

For outstanding coordination and technical precision to ensure required budget execution documents were completely processed and distributed to extend FSA and Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) programs funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) as authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill: Nancy Glynn, FSA Office of Budget and Finance, Budget Division.

Excellence in Leadership and Management

For dedicated service benefitting the farmers and ranchers of Box Elder County, Utah, and the local and state USDA employees: James Hall, County Executive Director, Box Elder County, Utah.

For exemplary leadership and management skills, resulting in a highly-motivated workforce: Danny Crawford, Alabama FSA State Executive Director.

For demonstrating outstanding skills in leadership and management: Cathy Kascak, EPAS.

Outstanding Team Accomplishment

For outstanding service in planning and executing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program's (CREP) 1-millionth Acre event: the Farm Programs "CREP Team"; John Carter, Lana Nesbitt, Beverly Preston and Cynthia Beringer; and from the Office of External Affairs and Management Support Division; Janet Connelly, Latawnya Dia, Kerry Humphrey, Julie Polt, Eleanor Rollings, Bill Schmalfeldt, Donna Smith and Stevin Westcott.

For producing an efficient and effective reporting process that supports the Agency's oversight goals: The District Director Farm Loan Programs Oversight Team; including Robert Herhenbach, James Bratcher, Gail Wargo, Denise Stukes, Thomas Berg, Erica Robinson, Brad Smith, DianeJo Hiles, Michael Moore and Polly Anderson.

For outstanding efforts in designing and implementing the Direct Loan System/Loan Making: The Direct Loan System/Loan Making Task Force from DAFLP, including; Ray Bartholemew, JoDee Bryant, Georgia Jenness, Kathleen Miller, Tammy Phelps, Sharon Teston, Michael Matthews, Pam Polson and Lisa Reynolds.

For outstanding accomplishment in the successful completion of the FLP Streamlining Initiative: The FLP Streamlining Task Force, including; Niki Chavez, William Cobb, Michael Cumpton, Michael Hinton, Marilyn McMullen, Michael T. Moore, Catherine Quayle, Clarence Ropp, Janet Safian and Gail Wargo.

For exceptional skill in analyzing the guarantee loan interest rates charged to borrowers by guarantee loan program lenders: The Guarantee Loan Interest Rate Analysis Team, EPAS, including; Charles Dodson and Steve Koenig.

For outstanding accomplishment in the management and issuance of handbooks and forms under the Farm Loan Programs Streamlining Initiative: The Forms, Graphics and Records Section and Management Analysis and Directives Section of FSA's Management Services Division, including; Sheri Aldape, Elizabeth Ashton, Vicki Claggett, Angela Coln, Anita Cromwell, Twila Hawkins, Alita Jordan, Erica Robinson, Joanne Shaw and Nicole Steele.

For outstanding accuracy, integrity and consistency in dealing with County Office Workload Reports: The Workload Query Group, Office of Budget and Finance/Budget Division, Administrative Expenses Branch, including; Ray Bartholomew, Gregory Diehl, John Fетters, John Robert McGrath, Danny Razor, Laura Schlote and Richard Steis.

For outstanding accuracy, integrity and consistency in dealing with County Office Workload Reports: The Workload Review Group, , Office of Budget and Finance/Budget Division, Administrative Expenses Branch, including; Rusty Cowan, Margaret Hartman, Donald Henry, Elizabeth Huffman, Barton Linderman, Kimy Nash, Michael Dwayne Oberschmidt, Anne Rickman, Toni Turner and Jesse Mark Warnick.

For exemplary persistence and professionalism in implementing the new Credit Subsidy Calculator 2 re-estimate process: The Credit Subsidy Calculator Implementation Team, Office of Budget and Finance/Budget Division, Programs Branch, Credit Programs Section, including; Anna Leung, William Willer, Chantha Seng, Kam Yeung, Susan Craft, David Erickson, Linda Schmidt, Paula Hartman, Angela Carroll and Loretta Lewis.

Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives

For exceptional skills in analyzing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) budgetary impacts under PAYGO: Alexander Barbarika, EPAS, Natural Resources Analysis Group.

For exceptional skill in analyzing the guarantee loan interest rates charged to borrowers by guarantee loan lenders and in supporting FLP's formulation of regulatory changes: Charles Dotson, EPAS, Farm Loan Analysis.

For creative excellence in designing and implementing the CCC's first Web-based commodity loan redemption process that significantly simplifies existing processes, reduces government and small-business costs, and significantly speeds the marketing of cotton loan collateral: Shannon Fulghem and Julie Floriani, Price Support Division.

For outstanding achievement in the reduction of delinquent dollars outstanding in the state of Texas FLP direct loan portfolio while continuing to reduce the Texas Direct Loan loss rate: The Texas Loan Delinquency Reduction Task Force, including; Lisa Burgay, Kevin Girdner, Fred Greenway, Ricky Grogan, Beth Hoover, Kelly McMillin and Terry Nelson.

For superlative effort permitting the seamless operation of USDA's sugar and honey support programs in 2007: Francina Hentz, EPAS, Dairy and Sweeteners Analysis.

Heroism and Emergency Response

For providing outstanding leadership and service to FSA customers in Vernon County, Wis., during and after disastrous weather conditions: Katherine Lewison, acting County Executive Director, Viroqua County, Wis.

Newcomer Award

For outstanding contributions toward peanut program improvement and effective public policy: Tiffany Arthur, EPAS, Fibers, Peanuts and Tobacco Analysis.

At the ceremony's conclusion, Administrator Lasseter again acknowledged the accomplishments of this year's award recipients.

"Our founder, Abraham Lincoln, gave USDA a mandate," she said. "That was to reach out to all the people of our great nation. This is something the entire USDA family does every day. This has been a great

opportunity for me to celebrate not only our award winners, but the entire FSA family. The work you do each and every day makes me so very proud to be Administrator of the Farm Service Agency."



Recognized for outstanding service in planning and executing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) celebration of the "1 Million Acres and Beyond" event: (Left to Right) Donna Smith, Janet Connelly, Latawnya Dia, Kerry Humphrey, Bill Schmalfeldt, Julie Polt, Glen Keppy, Teresa Lasseeter, John Carter, Lana Nesbit, Beverly Preston, Kent Politsch and Cindy Beringer. (Not pictured: Stevin Westcott)



For excellence in leadership and management, a 2008 Administrator's Award went to Alabama State Executive Director Danny Crawford (center).



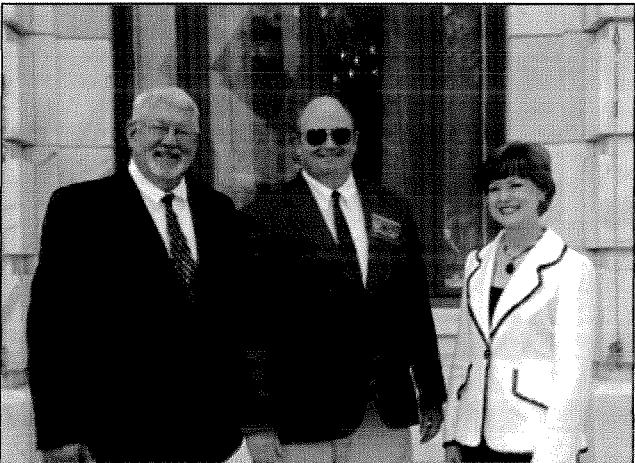
For their efforts in producing an efficient and effective reporting process that supports FSA's oversight goals, an Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award went to the FLP Oversight Review team: (Left to Right) Polly Anderson, Thomas Berg, Jr., Gail Wargo, Glen Keppy, Teresa Lasseeter, Denise Stukes and James Bratcher. (Not pictured: Bob Herchenbach, Erica Robinson, Brad Smith and DianeJo Hiles.)



A Civil Rights Leadership Award went to the Gooding/Camas County, Idaho, FSA Staff and Committee, represented by Harold Boggs, Jr. (Not pictured: Marty Beadz, Wesley Fields, Marianne Kramer, Linda Lemmon, Sandra Miller, Jilene Moore and Michael Sabala.)



For outstanding accomplishment in the management and issuance of handbooks and forms under the FLP Streamlining Initiative, an Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award was presented to the Forms, Graphics and Records Section and the Management Analysis and Directives Section of FSA's Management Services Division: (Left to Right) Erica Robinson, Angela Coln, Twila Hawkins, Elizabeth Ashton, Glen Keppy, Teresa Lasseter, Nicole Steele, Vicki Clagett and Joanne Shaw. (Not pictured: Sheri Adalpe, Anita Crowell and Alita Jordan.)



An Excellence in Leadership and Management Award was presented to Box Elder County, Utah, County Executive Director James Hall (center).



For providing outstanding leadership and service to FSA customers during difficult times in Vernon County, Wis., the Heroism and Emergency Response Award was presented to Acting Vernon County, Wis., County Executive Director Katharine Lewison (center).



For their outstanding efforts in designing and implementing the Direct Loan System/Loan Making, which greatly improved the operational efficiency of the Direct Loan Program, an Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award was presented to the Direct Loan System/Loan Making Task Force: (Left to Right) Kathleen Miller, Glen Keppy, Teresa Lasseter, Michael Matthews. (Not pictured: Ray Bartholomew, JoDee Bryant, Georgia Jenness, Tammy Phelps, Sharon Teston, Pam Polson and Lisa Reynolds.)



An Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award was presented the Workload Query Group: (Left to Right: Danny Razor, Glen Keppy, Teresa Lasseter, Bob McGrath. (Not pictured: Ray Bartholomew, Gregory Diehl, John Feters, Laura Schlote and Richard Steis.)



For outstanding accomplishment in the successful completion of the FLP Streamlining Initiative, an Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award was presented to the FLP Streamlining Task Force: (Left to Right) Gail Wargo, Cathy Quayle, Bill Cobb, Glenn Keppy, Teresa Lasseeter, Marilyn McMullen, Michael Cumpton and Michael Hinton. (Not pictured: Niki Chavez, Michael T. Moore, Chuck Ropp and Janet Safian.)



An Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award was presented the Workload Review Group: (Left to Right) Don Henry, Dwayne Oberschmidt, Kimy Hash, Glen Keppy, Teresa Lasseeter, Margaret Hartman, Elizabeth Huffman and Anne Rickman. (Not pictured: Rusty Cowan, Bart Linderman, Toni Turner and Jesse Mark Warnick.)

NO GROUP PICTURES AVAILABLE FOR:

CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERSHIP AWARD -

Lolla Smith

EXCELLENCE IN PROGRAM SUPPORT:

April MacDonald
Kathryn Modin
Pamela Reese
Nancy Glynn

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Catherine Kascak

OUTSTANDING TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENT AWARD

Guarantee Loan Interest Rate Analysis Team
Charles Dodson
Steve Koenig

Credit Subsidy Calculator Implementation Team

Agnes Leung

William Willer
Chantha Seng
Kam Yeung
Susan Craft
David Erickson
Linda Schmidt
Paula Hartman
Angela Carroll
Cloretta Lewis
Glenn Pfeffer
Scott Royster

EXCELLENCE IN ACHIEVING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Alexander Barbarika
Francina Hentz
Charles Dodson
Julie Floriani
Shannon Fulghem

Texas Loan Delinquency Reduction Task Force

Lisa Burgay
Kevin Girdner
Fred Greenway
Rickey Grogan
Beth Hoover
Kelly McMillin
Terry Nelson

NEWCOMER AWARD

Tiffany Arthur
