

Weekly Market Bulletin

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From Your Commissioner . . .

NH IPM Project Goes National, and Access to Land

George Hamilton, UNH Cooperative Extension Food and Agriculture Field Specialist based in Hillsborough County, recently returned from the Pesticide Stewardship Alliance meeting in Mobile, Alabama. Hamilton presented his boom sprayer calibration project, which has been gaining national recognition. He has also presented training workshops for Pennsylvania State University, and Pennsylvania has adopted his method statewide.



Each farm participant received information fact sheets describing the sprayer calibration, and a record of their calibration information. Farmers interested in calibrating their sprayers can contact George Hamilton for more information at George.Hamilton@unh.edu or 603-641-6060.

Last Tuesday's topic on NH Public Radio's The Exchange was the Farm Bill and how it affects New Hampshire. A caller from Piermont told how grateful she was to learn from her county USDA service center in Orford of a program that could assist her with her goal of selling her small farm property to a younger or beginning farmer. USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Director Jay Phinizy says it is his agency that offers the program, known as the Land Contract Guarantee Program.

This loan guarantee program is designed to help transition a farm to a new generation. To qualify for the Land Contract Guarantee Program, the purchase price of the farm cannot exceed the lesser of \$500,000 or the current market value of the property. Certain other restrictions on the terms of the loan apply. The real estate must be sold through a land contract to an eligible beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer. A land contract is an installment contract between a buyer and a seller for the sale of real property, in which complete ownership of the property is not transferred until all payments under the contract have been made. FSA guarantees the seller's loan. Contact your county FSA office for more information, or call the State FSA office at 603-224-7941 for county office locations and telephone numbers.

The New England Land Link, hosted by the New England Small Farm Institute, provides a website and other services to help connect owners and seekers of farm properties. Currently 15 or so New Hampshire properties or opportunities are listed on the website, from all regions of the state. For information, visit:

http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for_new_farmers/new_england_landlink/

Lorraine Merrill, Commissioner

Preventing drift during application of pesticides is a high priority. Hamilton stresses that preventing drift starts with accurate calibration of equipment, followed by accurate targeting or placement. To develop a practical and precise method of on-farm calibration of boom sprayers used in tree fruits, small fruits and vegetables, Hamilton received grants from EPA Region 1 to purchase special equipment from Belgium, and from the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food Integrated Pest Management program to develop procedures and training aids, conduct workshops for agricultural professionals, and perform calibrations of boom sprayers on farms and orchards across the state. The IPM grant included funding to hire a part-time technician and IPM scout, Steve Gatcombe of Peterborough.

Integrated Pest Management or IPM combines the use of biological, cultural, physical and chemical tactics in ways that minimize health and environmental risks and economic loss when controlling pests. Pesticide products today are used in much smaller quantities than those from decades ago, Hamilton notes. It is typical for a product to be applied at a rate of two fluid ounces per acre—making precision of delivery equipment even more important. "The amounts of material used today are so small," he says, "they can more easily be under- or over-applied."

Boom sprayer calibrations have been completed on 20 farms—two in each county—to ensure proper application of pesticides. Participating growers or farmers received one private recertification credit if they participated in the calibration and had a NH private restricted-use li-

Program to Transfer Farmland

The New Hampshire USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Office would like to remind landowners that the Land Contract Guarantee Program is available to landowners who wish to transfer farm real estate to the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

The Land Contract Guarantee Program provides a new approach for landowners willing to sell their land to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers because it reduces the seller's financial risk if the buyer defaults on the contract payments. The buyer must provide a minimum down payment of five percent of the purchase price, plan to operate the farm, and demonstrate the ability to make the land contract payments.

The national program offers two options, one that guarantees up to three annual installment payments on the contract and one that guarantees 90% of the unpaid principal of the contract. Guarantees can be used for financing the purchase of a farm with a purchase price up to \$500,000 on a new land contract.

Landowners can use any escrow agent that meets the program qualifications to service the land contract. If a landowner is interested in, or has questions related to, the Land Contract Guarantee Program, they can contact their local farm loan office to obtain a list of available nationwide escrow agents that can be used with this program.

FSA credit programs are designed to provide credit to eligible producers when conventional or commercial credit is not available or does not meet their credit needs. FSA programs create opportunities for farmers and ranchers - the backbone of our rural economy.

For more information about the Land Contract Guarantee Program contact the New Hampshire FSA Farm Loan Office at 603-223-6003.

Insurance for Spring Crops

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds New Hampshire farmers that the final date to apply for crop insurance on most insurable spring-planted crops for this crop year is March 15, 2013. Current policyholders also have until March 15 to make any changes to their existing contracts. Crop insurance provides protection against losses due to natural perils, such as drought, hail, wind, and excessive moisture.

March 15 is the Sales Closing Date for Corn, Forage Seeding, and Fresh Market Sweet Corn. Insurance is available for revenue loss caused by a change in the harvest price from the projected price for Corn. Producers are strongly urged to contact a local crop insurance agent as soon as possible for premium quotes and more details. For a list of crop insurance agents in your area, contact the local USDA Farm Service Agency office or log on to the Risk Management Agency web site at: <http://www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/>.