



Agricultural Law Update

May 2012

USDA NRCS NATIONAL WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE

- Liza C. Moore

On May 8, 2012, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Dave White announced a new National Water Quality Initiative. The Initiative identified priority watersheds nationwide. Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in those watersheds may be eligible for assistance in installing conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips, and terraces. Two of the 157 watersheds identified are in Michigan. Areas near the Upper Maple River in Clinton County and Kalamazoo River in Calhoun County were identified as priority watersheds. "The National Water Quality Initiative signifies a bold step by USDA to improve water quality in some very challenging watersheds," Vilsack said. "American farmers are good stewards of the environment, and this initiative provides them with additional tools to protect and improve fish and wildlife habitat and water

quality." All eligible applications must be submitted by June 15, 2012 to be considered for this fiscal year's funding opportunity.

For more information, please contact your local USDA service center. Please also visit: tinyurl.com/7y9wmkr and tinyurl.com/c7x22sj ■■



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UPDATE ON 2012 FARM BILL

On April 26, 2012, the proposed Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry by a vote of 16-5. The bill now awaits consideration on the Senate Floor. On May 15, 2012, forty-four U.S. Senators sent a letter to the Senate Majority Leader and Senate Republican Leader urging that the bill be scheduled for floor consideration.

Meanwhile, the House Committee on Agriculture is continuing to hold hearings regarding the 2012 Farm Bill, with additional hearings scheduled for May 16, 17, and 18, 2012.

For more information, please visit www.ag.senate.gov/issues/farm-bill and agriculture.house.gov

To view the May 15, 2012 Senate letter, please visit tinyurl.com/89g2sqt ■■

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- June 1, 2012** | Enrollment deadline for 2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program and Average Crop Revenue Election Program
- June 13, 2012** | Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development Meeting, Chesaning, MI
- June 16, 2012** | Breakfast on the Farm, Myers Farms LLC, Scotts, MI
- June 23, 2012** | Breakfast on the Farm, Choate's Belly Acres, Cement City, MI
- June 27, 2012** | MSU Weed Tour, East Lansing, MI
- July 17, 2012** | Michigan Livestock Expo Sale-agation, MSU Pavilion, East Lansing, MI
- July 17-19, 2012** | Michigan Ag Expo, MSU Campus, East Lansing, MI
- July 19, 2012** | Farmers Market at the Capitol, Lansing, MI
- August 1-2, 2012** | Farm Drainage and Nutrient Management Field Day, Pleasant View Dairy, Jonesville, MI



MSU STUDY SAYS AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTES \$91.4 BILLION TO MICHIGAN ECONOMY

On April 11, 2012, the director of the MSU Product Center, Chris Peterson, announced that a MSU study on 2010 data showed that agriculture contributes around \$91.4 billion to the Michigan economy. According to the study, the economic contribution of the industry has increased 50% between 2004 and 2010. "The impact of Michigan's farms and the commodities they produce is 12 percent of the overall total, and their economic contribution

has nearly doubled from less than \$7 billion to more than \$13 billion," Peterson said. "You'd be hard-pressed to find another business sector that has pulled through the recession with those kinds of numbers in just six years."

For more information, please visit tinyurl.com/6q3hqqe and www.productcenter.msu.edu ■■

HOT TOPIC: ADVOCACY "TELLING THE FARMER'S SIDE OF THE STORY"

Looking for credible research-based resources to share with people when you talk about how you provide food, clothing and energy for the world? Check out:

Michele Payn-Knoper, an MSU Animal Science alumna who is committed to helping agribusinesses find an honest and practical approach to making connections between gate and plate to those unfamiliar with agriculture.

Web: www.causematters.com

Jolene Brown, champion of the family-owned agriculture businesses and the founder of the Business-First Family Institute.

Web: www.jolenebrown.com

Advocates for Agriculture started by cattle ranchers Troy & Stacy Hadrack is dedicated to helping farmers tell the positive story of agriculture

Web: www.advocatesforag.com

Corn Farmers Coalition is an alliance of the National Corn Growers Association and 14 state corn associations with the goal of educating policy-makers in Washington and the public about how tech-savvy, innovative farmers are growing more corn every year – for food, animal feed, ethanol and exports – while using fewer resources and protecting the environment.

Web: www.cornfarmerscoalition.org

U.S. Farmers Ranchers Alliance is a partnership of U.S. food production partners working to answer Americans' questions about how we raise our food – while being stewards of the environment, responsibly caring for our animals and maintaining strong businesses and communities.

Web: www.usfraonline.org and www.fooddialogues.com

Common Ground works to educate consumers on the real story of American agriculture by starting conversations between women who grow our food and women who buy it.

Web: findourcommonground.com

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