

Natural Resource News in South Carolina

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USDA Official Visits Columbia to Discuss 2007 Farm Bill

COLUMBIA, February 2, 2007-USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Arlen Lancaster visited Columbia, South Carolina, on February 1, 2007, to discuss Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns' report back to the people on the Bush Administration's farm bill proposal. The more than 65 proposals correspond to the 2002 farm bill titles with additional special focus areas, including specialty crops, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged producers. The proposals are available at www.usda.gov/farmbill.

USDA began preparations for the 2007 farm bill in 2005 by conducting 52 Farm Bill Forums across the country. More than 4,000 comments were recorded or collected during forums and via mail. Chief Lancaster discussed the proposals, including why change is needed, the recommended solutions, and background information about the impacted program or policy.

NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas said, "We are pleased that Chief Lancaster chose to visit South Carolina and speak personally to the conservationists and producers in our state. I think that really says a lot about the impact that South Carolina has on the future of conservation, and it also means that our conservation leaders in Washington are willing to hear our comments and suggestions."

State and federal agency leaders, as well as farmers and conservationists attended the event. Chief Lancaster explained that the 2007 farm bill proposals would spend approximately \$10 billion less than the 2002 farm bill spent over the past five years, upholding the President's plan to eliminate the deficit in five years.

NRCS provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the nation's soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands. For more information about NRCS in South Carolina, visit www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov.

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