

**AG NOTES**  
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**USDA NEWS**

The USDA Service Center in Lewisburg will be relocating to a new service center at 1427 New Columbia Highway, Lewisburg sometime in January. An exact date is not known as of the time of this newsletter but is tentatively scheduled for the middle of January.

When that day comes, please be patient due to the fact they will have a short period of time where communications (phone & email) will be interrupted while these services are transferred to the new service center. However, the end result will be a good service center to benefit the farmers in our area. Tommy Turner, FSA County Executive Director, said “We appreciate everyone we serve and look forward to the new beginnings in our new service center.”

**NRCS 2022 FUNDING**

USDA has several fiscal year 2022 assistance opportunities for agricultural producers and private landowners for key programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program.

Through conservation programs, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help producers and landowners make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency and contribute to the nation’s broader effort to combat the impacts of climate change.

NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round. Funding is provided through a competitive process.

EQIP provides cost share assistance for producers to use 170-plus conservation practices to address a wide variety of resource concerns. Within EQIP, Conservation Incentive Contracts allow producers to further target priority resource concerns. CSP helps producers take their conservation activities to the next level through comprehensive conservation and advanced conservation activities. ACEP helps producers enroll wetlands, grasslands and farmlands into easements for long-term protection. Additionally, through RCPP, producers and landowners can work with partners who are co-investing with NRCS on targeted projects.

Special provisions are also available for historically underserved producers. For EQIP, historically underserved producers are eligible for advance payments to help offset costs related to purchasing materials or contracting services up front. In addition, historically underserved producers can receive higher EQIP payment rates (up to 90% of average cost). NRCS sets aside EQIP, CSP and ACEP funds for historically underserved producers.

NRCS conservation programs play a critical role in USDA’s commitment to partnering with farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and local communities to deliver climate solutions that strengthen agricultural operations and rural America. States may prioritize a variety of voluntary conservation practices through these NRCS programs, including those that support climate-smart agriculture and forestry (CSAF).

In fiscal year 2022, EQIP and CSP will provide targeted funding for CSAF practices, and Conservation Incentive Contracts – a new EQIP program – will be available nationwide with an emphasis on CSAF practices. Building on these efforts, NRCS will also prioritize climate investments through ACEP, RCPP and Conservation Innovation Grants.

Producers, landowners and forest managers IIN Bedford County interested in applying for assistance should contact the NRCS at 931-694-1441, Ext. 3.

We have a very active Bedford County Soil Conservation District board made up of area farmers that are committed to protecting the environment and promote sustainable farming practices.

## **THE KIDS**

I hope that everyone had a good holiday. We had all three of our children and their spouses and all three of the grandkids here for a whole week! And my sisters and their spouses came from back home in East Tennessee for a time.

We had a really great time. The kids got to see new baby kid goats born while they were here, they farmed and fed and the boys got to drive the Ranger and help Uncle Bo and me do an assortment of chores.

Hank has taken an interest in trap shooting, so Santa brought him an appropriate shotgun for that purpose. Uncle Aaron worked with him on taking shots. He's good at it! He outshot Uncle Aaron! I think he may add this sport to his resume'. And he wants to start his own business this year. How's that for a 12-year-old?

Ford is the technology guy in the group. Santa brought him some electronics, and he had them up and running in no time, interacting with his group of friends back in South Carolina. Amazes me how they can do those things, since I have to have help just to find a TV station!

Piper asked Santa for a real live unicorn, with wings! Though Santa couldn't catch one for her (they are most difficult to catch since they can fly off!), she had a great time with the toy ones, the toy horses, the dolls, the stuffed animals!

And then she turned five on New Year's Day, and she played on and had a birthday cake that she helped bake. And when she blew out the candles (some of them were trick candles that would re-ignite!), she wished for a real unicorn! (I don't know what we are going to do! But, we'll keep on trying to catch one!)