



6013 Lakeside Boulevard  
Indianapolis, IN 46278  
[www.in.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov)

### Farm Bill Proposal Hits the Mark

INDIANAPOLIS, April 3, 2007 – In August 2005, USDA held a Farm Bill listening session at the Indiana State Fairgrounds on Farmers' Day. Evidently, USDA officials were listening to what Indiana farmers had to say.

Last month when USDA Secretary Mike Johanns released his proposal for the 2007 Farm Bill, he hit the mark for most of the comments that farmers made at the listening session. "We reviewed the transcript comments that were made person by person, and matched them up with the administration's proposal," says Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. "Indiana farmers asked for several specific things that came through in the proposal, including more resources for beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers, help for fruit and vegetable growers, and initiatives to promote bio-energy production from the farm."

"One of the other areas farmers focused on specifically was the Conservation Title," says Hardisty. "Over and over we heard support voiced for current conservation programs, and the financial support for conservation that has come through the 2002 Farm Bill. There were requests to simplify conservation programs, which is addressed in USDA's 2007 proposal. There was strong support for the new Conservation Security Program, and requests to expand and fully fund it. The proposal recommends moving that direction. Support for a fully funded Conservation Technical Assistance Program was the most common thread in the Conservation Title. There was no specific line item for that in the proposal, but it will likely be an issue in budget considerations in the coming weeks and months."

The U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives have both reacted positively to the administration's proposal and the agriculture committees are working on their versions of the Farm Bill now. This USDA proposal is setting the tone for their discussions, and it is likely that key changes farmers asked for will be written into the Farm Bill, which is due later this year.

#

#### Contacts:

Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist, (317) 290-3200

Michael McGovern, Public Affairs Specialist, (317) 290-3200, ext. 324

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*