

## WVPT Farm Television Series Features Virginia Beef Industry

HARRISONBURG, Va. — On April 18 at 8 p.m., Reggie Reynolds, Bill McKinnon, and Joi Saville of Virginia's beef industry discussed issues of importance to cattle producers during WVPT — Virginia's Public Television's "Virginia Farming."

In recognition of the Virginia Cattlemen's Association's 50th anniversary, the panel, along with host Jeff Ishee, addressed a broad range of topics, ranging from cattle markets to Country-of-Origin-Labeling; and from the Virginia Beef Expo to a new book focused on the history of the cattle industry in Virginia.

The management team of WVPT is solidly behind the new television series, the Commonwealth's only locally produced, televised farm show.

WVPT President and General Manager Bert Schmidt said, "My priorities for public television are our children and our local community. Our expanded children's line-up and 'Virginia Tonight' are just two of the changes we made during my first year here at the station.

The idea for 'Virginia Farming' actually hit me early on after I moved here while I was being taken to our transmitter in Staunton. We drove on, what I would call, the 'backroads,' and I was so impressed with the large number of family farms that we passed. I wondered to myself whether we were doing our job, as the local public broadcaster, in serving the farming community. Were we impacting them?

I came back to the station, and asked these questions. I wanted to create a forum specifically for farmers — to address their needs — and 'Virginia Farming' was the result."

Schmidt continued, "Clearly the agricultural industry is a



Virginia Beef Industry officials recently appeared on "Virginia Farming," a new television series on WVPT — Virginia's Public Television. From left, host Jeff Ishee is joined by Beef Industry representatives Joi Saville, Reggie Reynolds, and Bill McKinnon.

major factor in all of our lives whether or not we are working directly in it. If the farm economy is down, it will trickle to each of us. If the 'non-farming' community (in which I count myself) can have a better appreciation for the issues facing this sector of our economy, we can then all work together better to make our communities a great place to live and work."

Each week on "Virginia Farming," host Jeff Ishee reports on market trends, long-range agricultural weather forecasts and individual farm communities. Guests from across the Commonwealth discuss Virginia's poultry, beef, dairy, crop, wine, seafood, timber, aquaculture, and related industries with Ishee. The series premiered March 28, 2003, with

guest Congressman Goodlatte.

Jeff Ishee is Farm Director for WSAV radio in Harrisonburg and hosts "On the Farm Radio," a syndicated radio show for listeners in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and North Carolina. He has a website [www.onthefarmradio.com](http://www.onthefarmradio.com).

"Virginia Farming" airs Fridays at 8:00 p.m. and repeats Saturdays at noon and Sundays at 6:00 a.m.

To submit program topic ideas, contact Jeff Ishee at phone (540) 363-3938, fax (540) 434-7481 or email [Jeff@onthefarmradio.com](mailto:Jeff@onthefarmradio.com). Visit [wvpt.net](http://wvpt.net) for the schedule of upcoming guests. "Virginia Farming" is underwritten by the Virginia Farm Bureau Association.

## USDA Sets CRP Sign-Up For May 5-30

FRENCHTOWN, N.J. — Doreen Beruck, acting county executive director for USDA's Farm Service Agency for Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, N.J., recently announced that the next Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up will take place from May 5 through May 30. Producers can sign up at local county Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices throughout the state.

"CRP is a cost effective, voluntary program that helps producers improve our land, water, and wildlife resources," Beruck said. "Also, CRP is the first program to benefit from new PC-based common computing environment (CCE) technology that provides efficient, 21st century response to producers' needs."

CRP protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion and is designed to improve the nation's natural resources base. Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years. In exchange, participants receive annual rental payments and a payment of up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices. The program allows producers to lock in multi-year payments based on local rental rates.

By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP also protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds, and streams. Acreage enrolled in the CRP is planted to resource conserving vegetative covers, making the program a major contributor to increases in wildlife populations in many parts of the country.

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized USDA to maintain CRP enrollment up to 39.2 million acres. Approximately 34 million acres were enrolled in CRP contracts

as of March 1 approximately 1516.1 acres in Hunterdon and 128.1 acres in Somerset. About 1.5 million acres subject to CRP contracts are scheduled to expire on September 30, including 62.2 acres in Hunterdon. Participants with contracts expiring next fall can make new contract offers. The contracts awarded under this sign-up will become effective on October 1, 2003 or October 1, 2004. The sign-up marks the 26th CRP sign-up. Another general sign-up will be offered through 2007.

FSA will also use CCE technology to evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) for environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in CRP. Decisions on the EBI cutoff will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI numbers of all the offers. Those who would have met previous sign-up EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up.

CRP is a highly competitive program, and landowners are encouraged to find out about the EBI before the May 30 deadline. Producers should also consult with local USDA experts on steps producers can take to maximize EBI points and increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

Producers can avoid the highly competitive EBI process under the general sign-up by enrolling the most environmentally desirable land under CRP's continuous sign-up program. Under the continuous sign-up, relatively small amounts of land serving much larger areas, such as filter strips, riparian buffers and grass waterways, can be enrolled at any time. Wetland restoration has been added as a continuous sign-up practice. Wetlands filter out pollution and sedimentation, as well

as improve water quality and serve as an important flood control mechanism by slowing the flow of water. More than four million acres have been reserved for continuous sign-up practices. Normal eligibility requirements apply, but the competitive nature of the EBI is waived because of the environmentally desirable nature of the practices available.

Aside from the general sign-up, CRP's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing. USDA has reserved two million acres for the continuous sign-up program, which represents the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. USDA is making a special effort to help enhance wildlife habitats and air quality by setting aside 500,000 acres for bottomland hardwood tree planting. Continuous sign-up for hardwood planting will start after the general sign-up.

For qualification requirements and other CRP information, visit FSA's Website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/data/crp/crp.htm>.

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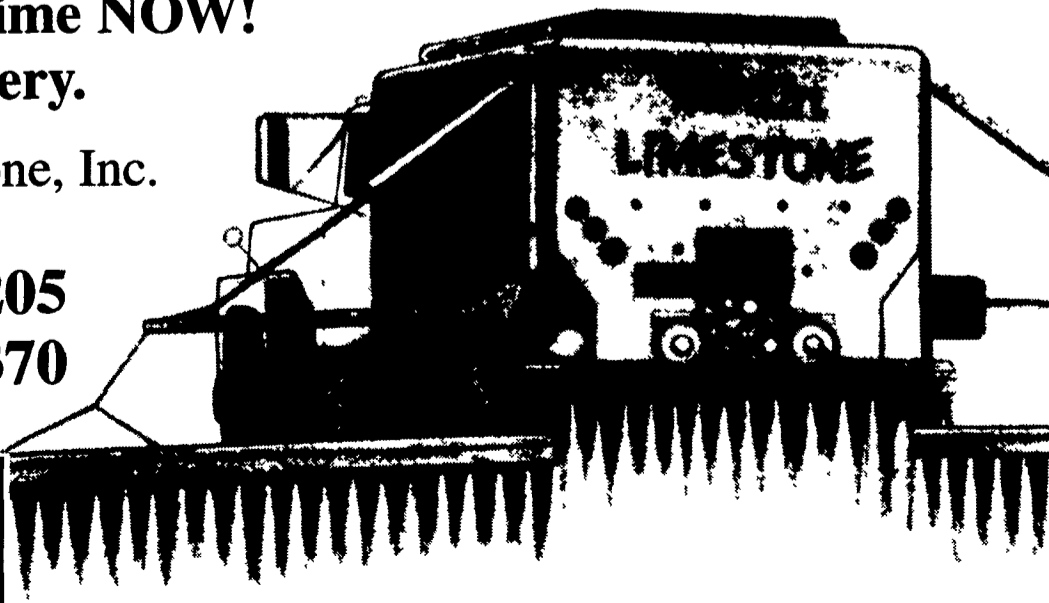
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