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RMA Employee to Represent USDA on Minnesota Organic Advisory Task Force

ST. PAUL, Minn., November 13, 2013 – USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced that Risk Management Specialist Anna Parker has been appointed to the Minnesota Organic Advisory Task Force (OATF). Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Commissioner Dave Frederickson made 15 appointments to the OATF, which was authorized by the Minnesota Legislature during the 2013 session. The first OATF was created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1990. A full slate of members is appointed every term the OATF is reauthorized. Parker will represent the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a three-year term.

Minnesota statute charges the OATF with advising both MDA and the University of Minnesota (U of MN) about policies and programs to improve organic agriculture in Minnesota. Through the state’s Open Appointments process, the commissioner appoints members in consultation with the dean of the U of MN College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences and the dean of Extension.

Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture. RMA recognizes organic farming as good farming practices and continues to move forward in improving crop insurance coverage for organic producers and producers transitioning to organic production. As a Risk Management Specialist, Ms. Parker serves as a liaison between organic producers and the agency.

“Significant changes lie ahead for organic crop insurance programs in the 2014 crop year,” said Parker. RMA will eliminate a 5 percent rate surcharge for organic production. Additionally, new crop-insurance pricing options will be available to organic producers who grow crops under guaranteed contracts beginning with the 2014 crop year. This contract price option allows organic producers who receive a contract price for their crop to get a crop insurance guarantee that is more reflective of the actual value of their crop. They will have the ability, where available and at their choice, to use their personal contract price as their price election or to choose existing crop insurance price elections. This contract price feature will be available to the majority of insured organic crops. RMA is also changing organic transitional yields (t-yields) so they will be more reflective of actual organic farming experience, starting with the 2014 crop year.

Organic producers can find more information concerning RMA programs at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/currentissues/organics/>.

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