Learn to prevent fires during National Fire Prevention Month

October is National Fire Prevention Month, a time when we should all be aware of ways to help learn fire safety and prevention. According to Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Acting Regional Director Dennis Hunsinger, most Americans under-

estimate their risk for fire, and many either lack emergency response plans – or fail to practice them with fire drills.

"This last week, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sponsored National Fire Prevention Week, with a great message: 'Home Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat!" said Hunsinger. "And it's true. One out of three home fires starts in the kitchen, and leaving cooking unattended and other unsafe kitchen practices are recipes for disaster."

Hunsinger also cautioned against complacency and encourages everyone to take the next step. "Annual observances like National Fire Prevention Week and National Fire Prevention Month are excellent opportunities to focus on fire hazards - but we should all practice fire safety every day-at home, at work and at play," he said. "The NFPA offers a wealth of safety information, fire prevention tips and resources on their comprehensive website: www.nfpa.org. And I encourage everyone to contact your local fire department to learn more about making your home safer from fire, or how you can best participate in fire prevention activities."

FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident, initiates mitigation activities and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA works closely with state and local emergency managers, law enforcement personnel, firefighters and other first responders. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.



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arm Service Agency (FSA) has sized operations. Farm owne

Loans can help some to buy farms

The Washington County Farm Service Agency (FSA) has loan funds available to help qualified women and minorities buy and operate family-sized farms. FSA reserves a portion of its loan guarantee funds to assist socially disadvantaged applicants.

Socially disadvantaged groups, for purposes of FSA's loan programs, are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA's loan and loan guarantee funds are available to individuals and entities that are primarily and directly engaged in

farming and ranching on familysized operations. Farm ownership loan funds are available to help purchase a farm or ranch. To qualify, the applicant must have participated in the business operation of a farm or ranch for at least three years.

For those applicants who have at least one year's experience in managing or operating a farm or ranch, funds are available to help with the purchase of livestock, machinery and equipment, as well as animal production expenses.

More information is available from your local USDA Service Center or on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

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