



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner
The Capitol • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800
www.doacs.state.fl.us

Please Respond to:
Florida Division of Forestry
3125 Conner Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1650
Phone: 850-488-4274

October 29, 2009

Ms. Debby Folsom, Acting State Executive Director
Florida Farm Services Agency
Post Office Box 141030
Gainesville, Florida 23614-1030

Dear Ms. Folsom:

The 2008 Farm Bill created the Biomass Crop Assistance Program. The Farm Bill provides that eligible material removed from NIPF lands must be done in compliance with a new or amended Forest Stewardship plan or other practice plan approved by the State Forester. This compliance requirement is designed to insure that biomass collection is sustainable and in compliance with water quality best management practices (BMPs).

FSA's Washington office has released guidance stating, "Landowners who are Eligible Material Owners (at the time of delivery to a Qualified Conversion Facility) are required to submit to the County Office documented proof that they have a Forest Stewardship Plan or other State Forester approved plan. Note: (A forest plan is not required for an aggregator or contractor, which could be a logger or broker.)"

In addition to our Forest Stewardship program there are several programs that provide oversight and guidance to forest management operations to insure sustainability and BMP compliance on private forests. Florida State Forester approved plan options include:

- ✿ Forests managed under a current Forest Stewardship Plan
- ✿ Forests managed under a current Tree Farm Plan
- ✿ Forests certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- ✿ Forests certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)
- ✿ Forests Managed under a plan prepared by a:
 - ✿ Society of American Foresters Certified Forester
 - ✿ Association of Consulting Foresters member
 - ✿ Sustainable Forestry Initiative member
 - ✿ Division of Forestry professional forester
 - ✿ Florida Forest Stewardship Program approved plan writer
 - ✿ Master Tree Farmer



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The Division of Forestry will assist Florida FSA in identifying qualifying participants in these "certification" programs. Upon verification that the Landowner/Eligible Material Owner has a plan meeting one of the standards listed above, the biomass would be considered in compliance with the Farm Bill's requirement for State Forester's plan approval.

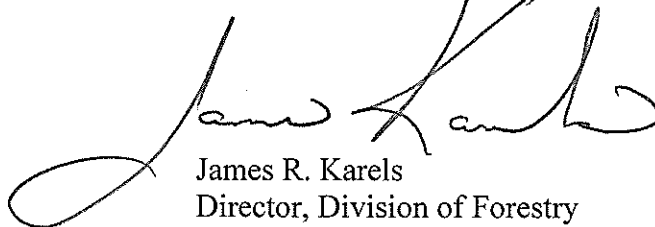
In the event of a plan prepared by a person who is not verifiably participating in the above mentioned programs, the State forester or his agent will require an opportunity to review the plan to insure the plan follows state BMP's and addresses sustainability before harvesting begins.

I have assigned Tony Grossman, Conservation Programs Manager to be the DOF lead on this. Contact him at (850) 414-9907 or by email at grossma@doacs.state.fl.us

Thank you for your continued assistance in promoting the wise use and management of Florida's natural resources. I look forward to working with you in implementing the 2008 Farm Bill programs.

Sincerely,

CHARLES H. BRONSON
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE



James R. Karels
Director, Division of Forestry

JRK/atg