



December 2007

FSA UPDATES

Chittenden/Washington
County
USDA Service Center

**Chittenden/Washington
County FSA**

802 865-7895 x4
800 910-2035 x4 (VT only)
802 865-7947 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/VT

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

John Rowley, Jr. LAA-1
Claude Lapierre LAA-2
Deborah Conant LAA-3
Elwin Neill, Jr. LAA-4
Michelle Gardner LAA-5

**Upcoming County
Committee Meeting**

Dates

January 16, 2008
February 27, 2008

Staff

Lawrence Parker x102
Eileen Powers x106
Pearl Wells x100
Bradford Parker x103

**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

Caroline Alves x203
Tate Jeffrey x119
Michel Lapointe x118
Danny Peet x202
Norman Smith x117

**Winooski Natural
Resources Conservation
District**

Jessica Andreoletti x104
Anna Farmer x204



Farm Loan Program Rules Streamlined

FSA's Farm Loan Programs will be modernized Jan. 1, 2008, to make it easier for farmers, ranchers and producers to apply for loans. Over the past few years FSA has streamlined areas of its farm loan programs, such as the Guaranteed and Emergency Loan Programs, by revising loan making and servicing requirements and procedures to better serve applicants and borrowers.

Direct Loans Programs streamlining includes:

- Reducing the number of pages in the Code of Federal Regulations necessary to administer the Farm Loan Programs by more than 80 percent;
- Modifying requirements to more closely conform to those used by other lenders;
- Ensuring all forms are available on-line;
- Cutting nearly in half the number of forms required; and
- Making guidance more manageable by replacing nearly 40 instruction manuals with six handbooks.

The program rules and forms will officially change on Dec. 31, 2007. This will allow employees time for nationwide training on the new forms and rules. Until then, FSA will follow current procedures.

The streamlining rule can be viewed via the *Federal Register* at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/frc/ont07.html.

More information about streamlining can be found at the county office or online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>; click on "Farm Loan Programs" for more information.

Dairy Disaster Aid Program Dairy Disaster Signup Begins

Eligible dairy producers can sign up for the Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP-III) at local FSA service centers beginning Dec. 3, 2007.

DDAP-III will help dairy producers recover production losses resulting from a variety of adverse weather conditions in the last few years. The program provides \$16 million in benefits to dairy producers for production losses that occurred between Jan. 1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007, because of qualifying natural disasters.

In all Vermont Counties, the qualifying period will be from May 1, 2006 through Dec. 31, 2006. Any farmer that experienced a drop in production directly attributable to poor quality feed will be eligible to apply. Final regulations have not been established, but it appears that many Vermont farmers may benefit through this program.

To find out more information or to apply for the program, contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA County Office.

Ag Census Begins in December

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will begin distribution of the 2007 Census of Agriculture later this month, thereby *allowing* America's farmers and ranchers *the opportunity to participate in shaping the future of agriculture*.

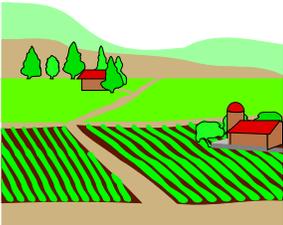
Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Census is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. According

to NASS, the Census of Agriculture provides information that is not available elsewhere. *The last Ag Census was conducted in 2002.*

NASS will mail out Census forms on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>.

The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

Policy-makers use Census data for decisions concerning agricultural and rural programs. Community planners use Census information to target delivery of local services. Companies rely on Census data when determining where to locate their operations. And farmers themselves look at Census data when deciding to make changes in their production strategies.



USDA Works to Protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

USDA has formally launched a Department-wide campaign to make certain that producers' "Personally Identifiable Information" or PII, is being protected. The PII generally refers to information which is maintained by a USDA agency about an individual, including USDA customers and USDA employees. Information may include details of financial transactions between a customer and the Department; such unique information as a Social Security number and a date or place of birth which could be used to trace an individual's identity; and other personal information, including medical or criminal history, which is linkable to a particular individual.

As part of USDA's official policy on social security numbers, USDA will collect, use, maintain, and/or disseminate Social Security numbers only when required by statute or when specifically authorized to do so. USDA agencies will not use the number as an identity

number. Agencies must mask or encrypt Social Security numbers so that they cannot be viewed on computer screens, reports, or other products. Agencies will not use Social Security numbers to access customer records.

FSA Seeks Public Comment on Emergency Conservation Program

FSA is offering members of the public an opportunity to voice opinions they may have about the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and suggest ideas about improving the program in the future.

ECP provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Funding for ECP is appropriated by Congress.

To learn more about ECP program issues and proposed alternatives, please review the Federal Register at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/e7-20961.pdf>

Written comments on the scope of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and requests for copies should be directed to ECP SEIS, Geo-Marine Incorporated, 2713 Magruder Blvd., Suite D, Hampton, VA 23666-1572.

To ensure that the full range of issues and alternatives are addressed, FSA invites comments. ***Comments should be submitted by close of business December 24, 2007.***

IRS Form 1099-G

Producers who have repaid a market gain on a Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan with cash or commodity certificates in exchange for outstanding loan collateral will now have their market gains reported to the IRS on Form 1099-G.

Due to changes in tax laws, FSA is now re-

quired to report to the IRS all market gains associated with the repayment of a CCC loan.

A market gain is the difference between the repayment rate, determined by the CCC, and the original loan rate. If the repayment rate drops below the original loan rate then the difference is considered a market gain. Producers will receive, by mail, the amount reported by FSA to the IRS for market gains and storage credits on IRS Form 1099-G.



Producers who have questions about how reporting market gains will affect their taxes should contact a tax advisor or visit the IRS website on *Repayment of Commodity Credit Corporation Loans* at http://www.irs.gov/irb/2007-33_IRB/ar07.html.

LDP Deadline on Unshorn Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have until Jan. 31, 2008, to apply for LDPs for unshorn pelts produced during the 2007 crop year.

Eligible producers must have beneficial interest in the pelts, owned the lamb for at least 30 calendar days before the date of slaughter and sell the unshorn lamb for immediate slaughter. Producers must also comply with wetland conservation and highly erodible land conservation provisions on all lands they operate or have interest in.

To qualify for payment, pelts must have been produced by an eligible producer from live unshorn lambs of domestic origin in the United States.

QUICK PROGRAM REMINDERS

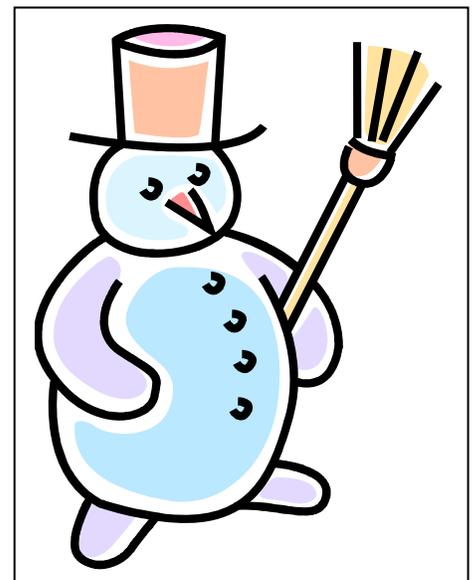
Livestock Compensation Program (LCP): This fully funded program offers benefits to Vermont livestock producers/owners who suffered feed losses during the 2006 crop year. Feed losses can be in the form of quantity and quality losses suffered on pasture land as well as losses of feed harvested for confinement animals. Compensation is calculated by a formula that considers number of animals and

feed value. Farmers, who suffered pasture losses only, will be able to complete their applications at this time. Those farmers with partial or total confinement systems will have to provide information establishing increased feed costs that resulted from the quantity and/or quality losses of harvested feed. Regulations are not yet finalized, but preliminary information can be input to give producers an idea of their potential level of benefit. LCP is open to all farmers with eligible livestock.

Crop Disaster Program (CDP): This is another fully funded program that covers all eligible crop losses in 2005, 2006, and some crops in 2007. Farmers must choose which year they wish to participate in. To be eligible for this program, farmers must have had crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Participants may apply for benefits on both quantity and quality losses. We are currently taking applications for the quantity portion of the program. Signup for quality losses is expected to begin after January 1, 2008.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): The deadline for obtaining NAP coverage on your Maple Sap crop is January 1, 2008. The coverage cost is \$100 for your entire crop in a particular county.

As always, please give us a call if you have any questions or would like to make an appointment to sign up.





Happy Holidays!

Dates to Remember	
Dec 24 - 25	Office Closed for Federal Holiday – Christmas Day
Jan 1	Office Closed for Federal Holiday – New Years Day
Jan 21	Office Closed for Federal Holiday – Martin Luther King, Jr
Feb 18	Washington’s Birthday

Visit our Web site: <http://www.fsa.usda/VT>

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