



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

Richard Parizo LAA-1
Claude Lapierre LAA-2
Deborah Conant LAA-3
Elwin Neill, Jr LAA-4
Michelle Gardner LAA-5

**Upcoming County
County Committee**

Dates

December 8, 2008
December 19, 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**

Ashley Lidman x104



The "Ten Acre" Legislative Change

On October 13, 2008, HR-6849 was signed into law and amended the commodity provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill to permit producers with small-acreage to participate in farm programs for the 2008-crop season. The Farm Bill modification for 2008 suspends the provision that prohibits Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) payments on eligible commodities if the sum of the base acres on the farm is 10 acres or less.

The legislation extends the 2008 crop year sign-up for producers with 10 base acres or less, until November 26, 2008. This regulation change ensures that no penalty can be assessed by USDA against participants who fell into this 10-acre prohibition, for failure to submit reports or timely comply with program requirements. The law also provides clarification on various aspects of the new standing disaster assistance program, specifically how minor acreages and grazing land are supposed to be treated under the program.

Producers with ten base acres or less are encouraged to contact their local FSA office before November 26, 2008 to schedule an appointment to enroll in the 2008 DCP farm program.

NAP Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

The application deadline date for the 2009 coverage on fall seeded crops has been extended to **December 1, 2008**. In order to be eligible for disaster assistance programs, like SURE, **producers are required** to timely pur-

chase, at a minimum, CAT coverage for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for all non-insurable crops on their entire farm.

NAP coverage for 2009 costs \$250 per crop, but not more than \$750 per producer per county, or not more than \$1875 total per producer for all counties.

Producers who already have coverage on 2008 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2009, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date.

Producers should also make themselves aware of USDA's definitions of 'Limited Resource Producer' and 'Socially Disadvantaged Producer'. *Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Program Status* is based on (1) a farm's gross sales, and (2) the adjusted gross household income in each of the last 2 years. The thresholds vary by what county a producer is based in. There is a worksheet available on the web at <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tool.asp>, or you can call or visit the County Office for the information.

A *Socially Disadvantaged Producer* is one who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. For entity applicants, all members of the entity must be socially disadvantaged. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

Disaster Assistance under the New Farm Bill

The 2008 Farm Bill includes a new disaster program known as the **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE)**.

Unlike FSA's past crop disaster programs which based payments on measures of the quality and quantity of individual crops, independent of any other crops, SURE is a revenue



guarantee program similar to crop revenue insurance. This means that the program will take into account the entire farm's revenue stream. In order to be eligible to participate in SURE, a producer **must purchase insurance or NAP coverage** for all crops produced that are economically significant at the 10% level. That is, any crop, including maple sap, Christmas trees, vegetables, and hay, that contributes 10% or more to a farm's annual revenue, must be covered to be eligible for SURE payments.

Similar to past disaster assistance programs, a producer will have to operate land in a county that has had a "secretarial declaration" for a disaster, or an adjacent county. But, a big difference in the administration of SURE is that the program regulations will already be in place when disaster strikes. In the past, FSA has had to wait for Congress to create legislation that addresses only a specific event that has already occurred. Under SURE, it is expected that benefits will be paid out in a much timelier manner.

For more information about SURE, there is a good article available on the web written by William Edwards of the Iowa State University Extension Service at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/crops/html/a1-44.html> You may also pick up a copy of the article by stopping in at the Chittenden/Washington County FSA office.

Don't forget, ***in order to participate in SURE, your crops must be covered by commercial crop insurance or FSA's NAP policy.*** And the deadline for applying for NAP coverage on many 2009 crops is fast approaching – **December 1, 2008!**

Voting for County Committee Begins

Ballots for this year's county committee election were mailed to eligible voters on November 3, 2008. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency county office by the close of business on ***December 1, 2008.*** If mailed, ballots must be postmarked by midnight December 1, 2008.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Chuck Farr and Cheryl Dowd in LAA #3, Chittenden/Washington County, to serve as a committee member. Both reside in Richmond and have farmed there for many years.

Paul Hartshorn, Elwin Neill and Catherine Scribner in LAA #4, Washington County, to serve as a committee member. Hartshorn and Neill reside in Waitsfield and Scribner resides in Middlesex. They have all farmed in the area for many years.

Eligible voters in local administrative areas (LAA) 3 and 4 who have **not** received a ballot should contact the FSA county office staff.

Voter Requirements

Persons meeting requirements in **1 or 2, plus 3**, below, is eligible to vote:

- 1.** Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as either of the following:
 - an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper,
 - or**
 - a partner in a general partnership or member of a joint venture that has an interest in a farm as an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper; or
- 2.** Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm; *and*
- 3.** Eligible to participate in any FSA program that is provided by law, regardless of the status of funding.

Discrimination Prohibited No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

Farm Loan Year End Reviews

Producers that have a farm loan with FSA are reminded they must provide data for their Year-End Analysis (YEA) to their loan officer each year. Borrowers are urged to provide this information timely so that their files can be maintained. The office will contact you for the data you will need to provide us.

Applications for FSA Farm Loan Assistance

Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager or Officer for more details and assistance in applying.





Operating Loan Applications Needed Now Farmers that plan to apply to the Farm Service Agency for annual operating loan assistance this year are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. The earlier an application for loan assistance is filed, the quicker the FSA staff can process your request. In addition, due to budget constraints, farmers that wait until later in the year to apply, often run the risk of finding out that our funding allocations have been utilized already. Farmers should also contact their FSA Farm Loan Manager or Officer at 802 527-1296 or 800 717-8637 for information as to what is required in order to have a complete loan application on file. Decisions on loans can not be made until a complete application is received.

Online Services

Producers, if you have Internet access you can electronically log on, fill out and print a variety of FSA paper forms in the comfort of your home as your schedule allows. You can also register for secure electronic access that will allow you to electronically sign and transmit some forms directly to the county office staff. If you are new to the website, first you will want to obtain a Level 2 USDA Service Center Customer ID and password at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and then click on "Create an Account Page" link.

USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. This includes things such as submitting forms electronically, completing surveys online, and checking the status of your USDA accounts.

If you already have a Customer ID and password, then click on the following eForms website at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet> and then click on the "Sign In" button. A disclaimer window will open and after you read the "Warning message" click on the "Continue" button.

Then the USDA Web services page will open to the eAuthentication login page. Enter your login User ID and password and then click on the "Login" button. To sign and transmit forms electronically, you must sign-up and get a User ID and password.

Submitting an e-Form is convenient. You can access information anytime day or night seven days a week. It's faster and forms and applications can be submitted and received in the county office in a matter of minutes, not days or weeks.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

2008 Production Reports Due for NAP Policy Holders

All producers who carried Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 should be collecting and submitting their production records for the year. ***Production reports are a requirement of NAP.*** Keeping records of crop harvesting is very important. Producers should be documenting their daily or weekly volumes through the use of a calendar, a journal or log book, pick records, a file of sales receipts, or some other method. Production records should tie in directly to reported acreages. Information that may be necessary for the County Committee to use in the event of a declared disaster or the submission of a NAP claim includes, but is not limited to:

- number and weight of bales from specific properties;
- number of wagons and the net weight of the haylage and the acreage the production came from;
- receipts from contractors for harvest services rendered
- sales receipts if production is sold including U-Pick operations

FSA does not currently have a specific form that you must use to submit reports on, so ***please get your records together, call the County Office, and make an appointment to report your production.***



Selected Interest Rates for November 2008	
Farm Operating - Direct	3.375%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.875%
Limited Resource - Farm Operating	5.00%
Limited Resource - Farm Ownership	5.00%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility	3.250%

Dates to Remember	
Nov 27th	Office Closed for Federal Holiday – Thanksgiving Day
Dec 1 st	Deadline to return county committee election ballots
Dec 1 st	NAP deadline on fall seeded crops, berries, fruit trees & Christmas trees.
Dec 25 th	Christmas Day, Office closed
Dec 26 th	Possibly Closed – Please call before coming in.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program
Jan 1 st	New Year's Day – Office Closed
Jan 1 st	New Committee Members take office

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

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