



August 2010

# Chittenden/Washington County FSA News

Chittenden/Washington  
County  
USDA Service Center

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

### Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### County Committee

Richard Parizo LAA-1  
Daniel Pillsbury LAA-2  
Sumner Farr, Jr LAA-3  
Catherine Scribner LAA-4  
Morgan Churchill LAA-5

### Upcoming County Committee Meeting

#### Dates

August 25, 2010  
September 15, 2010

#### Staff

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

### Natural Resources

#### Conservation Service

Caroline Alves x203  
Tate Jeffrey x119  
Michel Lapointe x118  
Danny Peet x202  
Norman Smith x117  
John Thurgood x204

### Natural Resources

#### Conservation District

Justin Kenny x104

## “OOPS, I forgot!” or “Yeah, it’s on my desk somewhere?”

Well, many important deadlines have come and gone for a variety of FSA programs, and there are customers in each program who have not complied with regulations. In some cases, there is something that can be done to establish eligibility, in others the person is out of luck. Here’s a rundown of passed deadlines, consequences, and possible remedies:

**June 1, 2010;** enrollment for fiscal year 2010 Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) contracts and 2010 Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) contracts ended, unless you contacted the office and we were unable to work with you. In this case, you were added to a register and allowed to enroll until June 30, 2010. Any contract enrolled outside of these dates and circumstances cannot be approved at the county level; we must pass them on to higher authority for consideration. Except for unique situations, the 2010 contract won’t be approved.

**July 15, 2010;** that was the final date for crop reporting for the 2010 crop year, for most crops. The office again ran a register for those of you contacting the office before 4:30 on the 15<sup>th</sup>, but we were unable to accommodate you. For those of you that still have not filed your reports, there will be a fee assessed for each farm reported. No, you are not a single farm; the charge is for each farm (number) that you currently operate on. So what happens if you don’t want to pay, and just don’t report? LOTS! You *will not receive any program payments on any farm without an acreage report*, including DCP, ACRE, Conservation Reserve [Enhancement] Program (CRP/CREP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), or Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment Program (SURE).

**July 15, 2010;** this was the original deadline for submission of yields for 2009 ACRE contracts. All ACRE participants received a direct mailing from this office reminding them of the deadline and results of non-compliance. Some of you *still did not file the necessary reports*. YOU LUCKED OUT!

Washington has extended the deadline to September 1, 2010. After that date, any contract files missing the yield data will be incomplete, and you **will not receive ACRE payments**. There is no provision for late filed yield information.

**July 15, 2010;** the final date to report crop yields for NAP Actual Production History (APH) purposes, for crop years 2008 & 2009. Your APH is unique to your farm, and is the basis for calculating any benefits due you under NAP, when you suffer a 50% or greater loss because of adverse weather events. Your APH is also used to calculate benefits under the SURE disaster program. Late is late, and any records submitted after July 15, 2010 will not be used to calculate your current 2010 APH. Luckily 2010 is shaping up to be a good crop year, so the missing data, input as zero production, should not hurt you. There are provisions that allow late filed reports to be used in subsequent years, so please send them in.

The **final date** to sign up for benefits for 2008 crop losses under the SURE program is **September 30, 2010**. Sign up has been rather slow around the state, and Chittenden & Washington Counties are no exception. We have completed only six applications in Chittenden County and two in Washington County. It does take a noticeable effort on your part, so if you think you’ve signed up, but are not positive, you probably AREN’T! Give us a call and make an appointment, and we will help you through the process. Office time has averaged around 15 minutes per customer, when preliminary information is provided. All producers who suffered at least a 10% loss in quantity or quality of a crop in 2008 should contact us to determine eligibility. Although NAP coverage and/or crop insurance are generally required for SURE eligibility, there are exceptions. We do know that there are customers within both counties who will qualify for SURE under these exceptions. ***So, make an informed decision by calling the office and getting the facts. To sum it up, CALL!***



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## CRP Sign-up Opens August 2

A general sign-up will open for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) on August 2, 2010, and continue through August 27, 2010. During the sign-up period, farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general sign-up.

CRP provides conservation practices that preserve the soil, clean water, and restore wildlife habitat. Producers enrolling in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers in exchange for annual rental payments, cost-share, and technical assistance. Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years.

USDA is authorized to maintain CRP enrollment up to 32 million acres. All interested farmers and ranchers should contact the local FSA office to learn more about this program.

## Transition Incentives

Remember the Transition Incentives Program (TIP) sign-up opened May 17, 2010. Retired or retiring owners or operators are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the date of the expiration of the CRP contract, provided the transition is not to a family member.

To be eligible, TIP requires that the retired or retiring farmer or rancher:

- Have land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that is in the last year of the contract.
- Agree to allow the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher make conservation and land improvements.
- Agree to sell, or have a contract to sell, or agree to long-term lease (a minimum of 5 years) the land under CRP contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher by Oct. 1 of the year the CRP contract expires.

Generally, TIP only applies to contracts that expire on September 30, 2010, or later. However, retired or retiring owners or operators with CRP contracts that expired on September 30, 2008, and September 30, 2009, may be eligible to enroll in TIP. To learn more contact your FSA Service Center or County Office or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## CREP & Continuous CRP

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a program to decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat and safeguard ground and surface water. CREP is a partnership with federal and state govern-

ment and for specific geographic areas.

Environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) or Continuous CRP will be eligible for annual rental payments and cost-share of up to 50 percent on approved practices. These programs will remain funded, and continue to provide heightened environmental benefits.

## Farm Loan Programs

The FSA is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,112,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

## Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Funds are available for operating type loans and to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for Socially Disadvantaged Applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

If producers or their spouses believe they

would qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

## Wetland Compliance

Producers renting or purchasing land that may have a converted wetland status need to check with the county office to learn if there are restrictions.

Farm Bill regulations provide that, unless exempt, persons are ineligible for benefits under certain programs administered by USDA if they

- plant an agricultural commodity on wetland that was converted after December 23, 1985
- convert a wetland after November 28, 1990

FSA may not approve any loan or loan guarantee to drain, dredge, fill, level or otherwise manipulate a wetland, or to engage in any activity that results in impairing or reducing the flow, circulation or reach of water except in the case of activity related to the maintenance of previously converted wetlands.

The following provides permitted uses and restrictions of certain wetlands for compliance with Wetland compliance provisions:

- wetlands can be farmed under natural conditions, but not converted
- wetlands converted before November 28, 1990, cannot be planted to an agricultural commodity and retain eligibility for benefits
- wetlands converted after Nov. 28, 1990, must either be restored to wetland status or mitigated to regain eligibility for program benefits.
- wetlands that can be farmed under natural conditions cannot be manipulated in any way, unless the Natural Resources Conservation Service determines the work would have a minimal effect on the wetland values
- wetlands converted before December 23, 1985, can be farmed and maintained
- Additional information about wetlands is available at the USDA Service Center.

## Actively Engaged

FSA wants to remind producers about the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a le-

gal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000

## Electronic Services

If a producer has Internet access, program participants can access many services from home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

To participate in these services, you must meet all program eligibility requirements. Online services have stringent security measures to protect your private information.

To utilize electronic services a producer needs an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires an e-mail address and filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> followed by a visit to the county office for identity verification.

If you have questions, or would like assistance establishing your account, just contact your local USDA Service Center and talk with our trained FSA personnel.

## Preventing Fraud

The FSA supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA assists RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office.

## ACRE Yield Data Deadline Extended

The deadline for 2009 production certification to comply with ACRE was extended until September 1, 2010. The extension is for completing both the farm benchmark yield (2004 through 2008) and the actual farm yield (2009). Participants in the 2009 ACRE program must certify their yields by September 1, 2010 to remain eligible for ACRE benefits.

## Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- has operated a farm for not more that 10 years
- will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

Selected Interest Rates for August 2010	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.50%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.625%
Limited Resource	%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	5.0%
Emergency	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year	2.50%
Sugar Storage Facility – 10 year	3.00%
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year	3.375%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.250%

Dates to Remember	
Aug 2	CRP General Sign-up Begins
Ongoing	Transition Incentive Program Signup
Sept 1	ACRE Production Certification Ends
Sept 6	Labor Day – Office Closed
<b>Sept 30</b>	<b>2008 SURE sign-up ENDS</b>

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."