



February 2007

Orleans County News

Farm Service Agency

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334-6090-Phone
1-866-241-2190 Toll Free Phone
334-1365-Fax

Hours

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

County Committee

Scott Birch, Chair
Brad Maxwell, Vice Chair
Doug Lawson, Voting Member
Donna Hammond, Minority Advisor

COC meets 2nd Wednesday of
each month.

NRCS District

Karen O'Donnell, Clerk X18
Marybeth Whitten, ARS X22
Dee Nault
Paul Daniels, Chair
Betsy Inkel, Vice Chair
Richard Delfavero, Treasurer
Burton Strong
William Ryan
Darryl Mongeon

NRCS Staff

David Blodgett, DC X25
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David Gauvin, CET X23
Brenda MacDonald-Kuper, SC X21
Lance Gorham, SC X24
Robert Long, SS X20
Jessica Philippe, SS X19

Loan Staff

Brian Kuper, FLM X14
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Diane Gilman, FLO X11
Dorcas McAllister, FLO X15
Cheryl Smith, PT X13
Angela Goodridge, PT X12

Program Staff

William Putnam, CED X28
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Laurie Locke, PT X16
Brock Columbia, PT X26



Complaint Process

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

March 15 Crop insurance & Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program NAP (annual crops) application deadline.

Emergency Loans- Reminder!

The USDA Secretary has designated Vermont as a natural disaster area. All Vermont farmers who suffered significant damage due to severe weather conditions, including excessive rainfall and flooding, may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from FSA. These loans carry an interest rate of 3.75%.

Production Losses - Eligible farmers can also use emergency loan funds to recover a portion of losses on growing crops that were destroyed. **Producers** may borrow up to 100 percent of the actual production or physical losses, to a maximum of \$500,000. **Loan applications have a sign-up deadline of February 23, 2007.**

Please call the loan staff at 802-334-6090 and ask to speak with a loan officer to see if you qualify for an Emergency Loan.

Annual DCP Enrollment

The 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) sign-up began October 1, 2006, and will continue until June 1, 2007. Farmers are encouraged to sign up for the DCP program online or at the FSA office. The online service is an example of the technological innovation USDA is using to make its programs more accessible.

Following the June 1, 2007, deadline, USDA will accept late applications through Sept. 30, 2007, with a \$100 late fee. While DCP participants must designate shares and sign DCP contracts annually, producers can choose not to participate in the program in any given year.

For 2007, eligible producers may request to receive direct advance payments based on **22 percent** of the direct payment rate for each commodity associated with the farm.

When you sign the CCC-509, you are agreeing to

- comply with highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions on all your land;
- devote acreage equal to the base acreage to an agricultural or conserving use;
- effectively control noxious weeds and otherwise maintain base acres according to sound agricultural practices;
- not plant perennial fruits and vegetables (FAV) or harvest annual FAVs on base acres;
- file an acreage report with respect to all cropland on the farm; and
- notify the county office staff when there is a transfer of or change of interest of a producer.

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to **Douglas Lawson** of Irasburg. Doug was elected to his first 3-year term as a COC member and will represent farmers located in Irasburg, Albany, Barton, Glover, Craftsbury, Greensboro and Greensboro Bend.

IMPORTANT--- 2007 Eligibility Review

Due to a recent mandate from Washington, D.C., all FSA County Offices are required to perform full reviews of eligibility documents before issuing 2007 program payments. We have begun this process with the Milk Income Loss Contract Extension (MILCX) program.

AD-1026 "Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification" forms must be completed and returned before the next MILCX payment can be issued. All affiliated persons with farming interests must file an AD-1026.

Once this process is completed we will be conducting a review of additional eligibility documents, such as;

- CCC-502 Person/Actively Engaged Determinations
- CCC-526 Adjusted Gross Income Certifications
- CCC-441 Gross Revenue for NAP Certifications
- FSA-211 Power of Attorney
- As well as review of proper signatures

Programs requiring the above eligibility documents are:

- Conservation Reserve Program
- Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program
- Crop Disaster Program
- Noninsurable Assistance Program
- Loan Deficiency Program
- Marketing Assistance Loss Program

Conservation Compliance

All participants in USDA programs are required to have a conservation system in place on all the highly erodible land (HEL) that they operate. Several areas where problems can arise with complying with a conservation system are; renting new cropland, purchasing new land, breaking out additional cropland, planting different crops such as soybeans, and changing or removing existing conservation practices.

It is very important that you contact the FSA office before doing any of the above. Also, it is very important that you contact our office before modifying - tiling, draining, dredging, filling, or leveling - any wetland or drainage ditch. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in loss of all Federal payments and eligibility.

Record Changes

If you have bought, sold or are renting different land, make sure you report the changes to the Farm Service Agency office as soon as possible after they occur. For farm ownership changes you will need to provide a recorded deed or recorded land contract. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and fines if you are participating in our program.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Power of Attorney

If you're too busy getting work done around the farm to come into your local FSA office to conduct business and complete your paperwork, here's a solution. Retain an agent to act on your behalf for programs and transactions authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill and most other FSA administered programs. This can be done by completing form FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Forms obtained and completed outside USDA Service Center offices must be notarized. To find out more, call the office.

Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

Attention Producers, Landowners!

**Do you intend to clear timber areas to create or to expand existing crop areas? *Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field? *Are there any areas on your farm(s) that you are considering cropping that have not been cropped in recent years? *Is there a wet spot in a field that you want to drain to make cropping easier? *Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?*

These are Highly Erodible and Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they may remain eligible for USDA benefits. Please contact your NRCS representative before you begin.

Direct Deposit and Bank Account Changes

As of January 1, 1999, all FSA payments are supposed to be electronically transferred into your bank account. Forms are available at the FSA office to sign up for direct deposit if you haven't yet. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. **It's very important that you realize you have the responsibility to notify FSA and NRCS individually of any change to your direct deposit account. Even though we are in the same office, each section has different rules and protocols that apply to direct deposits and electronic funds transfers.** Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Farmers are able to take advantage of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP will reimburse farmers for retiring cropland or pastureland adjacent to streams and rivers by establishing buffers. Program participants will receive annual rental payments, cost-share assistance, and other financial incentives under 15 or 30 year contracts for installing and maintaining forested riparian buffers or grass filter strips. Eligible cropland must have been *considered* row cropped 4 of the 6 years between 1996 and 2001. Pastures adjacent to waters do not carry this requirement. Annual rental payments vary from \$120/acre to \$236/acre.

For more information about CREP contact Brock or Bill at 802-334-6090.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these requirements.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact their FSA County Office.

Real Estate for Sale

The Farm Service Agency's Inventory Property Web site provides an online guide to government-owned real estate and potential foreclosure sales information, which includes farm/ranch properties, houses, lots and buildings. Purchase preferences are given to beginning farmers who have operated a farm or ranch for more than three years, but not more than 10 years; this requirement also applies to all members of an entity.

The site provides access to detailed information about each of the properties and links to other USDA Web sites providing a variety of services. Lenders are welcome to use this Web site as a resource by visiting: <http://www.resales.usda.gov>.