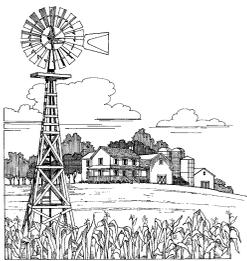


March 2008

Orleans County News



Farm Service Agency
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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

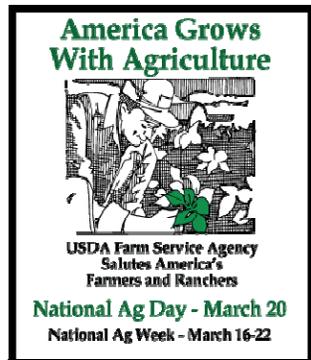
COC meets 2nd Wednesday of each month.

NRCS District
Karen O'Donnell, Clerk X18
Marybeth Whitten, ARS X22
Dee Nault
Paul Daniels, Chair
Bill Lawson, Vice Chair
Richard Delfavero, Treasurer
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Brock Columbia, PT X26



Livestock Compensation Program (LCP)

— Sign-up continues for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP). An ending date has not yet been announced but you are encouraged to apply now. The LCP program covers pasture loss and additional feed costs for crop year 2006. Additional feed (forages, additives, concentrates, extenders) must have been purchased and PAID FOR between May 15, 2006 and May 14, 2007 to be eligible. Call the office for more details.

Crop Disaster Program (CDP)

— Sign-up continues for the quantity part of the Crop Disaster Program (CDP). An ending date has not yet been announced. CDP-quantity provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity losses to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions. Producers who incurred qualifying losses must choose only one year to receive benefits. Producers may apply for benefits for losses to multiple crops as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year.

Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35 percent to be eligible for CDP.

Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

USDA will announce and conduct sign-up for CDP-quality losses at a later date.

Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the June 30th deadline on small grains and a July 15th deadline on all other crops.

Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the earlier of June 30th for small grains, Feb 15th for honey and maple sap and July 15th for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

Value-Added Agricultural Grants Available

USDA Rural Development is soliciting applications for \$18.4 million in competitive grant funds to help independent agricultural producers enter into value-added market activities. Last year, 162 recipients from 42 states received \$22.6 million to implement innovative projects, including four from Vermont totaling \$397,017 for projects including manufacture of cheese, feasibility for an on-farm woodchip gasification system, wine production and marketing, and on-farm processing of organic foods. The maximum grant amount for economic planning activities is \$100,000 and the maximum grant amount for working capital expenses is \$300,000. Vermont farmers, farmer groups, farmer cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures are invited to apply to the Montpelier State Office not later than March 31, 2008.

Eligibility requirements, an application guide, and other materials may be obtained by calling 802-828-6031 or online at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm>.

Beware of Crop Insurance Rebating Schemes

With the spring sales closing date for many Federal crop insurance policies right around the corner, crop insurance agents have stepped up their marketing efforts. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has received reports from producers and agents that some aggressive marketers have been approaching producers with rebating offers. These schemes promise lower insurance premiums, refunds, dividends, or items of value tied to crop insurance purchases. Most of these activities are illegal.

RMA reminds all Federal crop insurance program participants that it is now coordinating with state regulators to take appropriate regulatory action against all those who are found to promote or participate in such schemes. **Producers who are found to participate in illegal rebating activities will not only lose their crop insurance coverage but will also lose eligibility in all USDA programs.** Producers and agents can report suspicions of illegal rebating to the OIG Hotline: 1-800-424-9121.

REMINDER — The deadline to purchase crop insurance (from an independent agent) for spring seeded crops including corn is **March 15th**.

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.

Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment (DDAP-III) Program Sign-up has started!!!

The Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment (DDAP-III) Program **sign-up for will run from March 5, 2008 until May 5, 2008.** This program provides \$16 million in benefits. No payments will be issued until all applications are in and tabulated. Benefits will be calculated using a maximum payment rate per pound based on the average annual Mailbox price by State. If the total calculated benefit nationwide totals more than \$16M, then a national factor will be developed to stay within the funding allotment. Producers in Vermont are eligible to apply for 2006 and/or 2007 milk production losses caused by natural disaster. A producer's loss will be calculated by subtracting commercially marketed production from the base year production. The base period for each disaster year will be the average annual marketed production from calendar years 2003 and 2004. To establish this, you will need to provide documentation of milk production for the calendar years 2003 and 2004, as well as the average number of cows in the dairy herd during those years. To apply, we will need production and the average number of cows in the dairy herd for the years that you are applying for. To find out more information or to apply for the program, contact your local FSA County Office.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Deadline Approaching

March 15th is the deadline for producers to apply for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or NAP coverage, for 2008 spring seeded crops (e.g., vegetables, soybeans, small grains, etc.). The application and service fee must be filed by the applicable closing date for each crop. To remain eligible for NAP, a producer must annually report the crop, including: type, variety, location, producer shares, date planted, and the intended use (fresh, processed, etc.). Once the crop is harvested the production must also be reported.

NAP provides assistance in the event of catastrophic losses to crop types not insurable under regular crop insurance programs. The cost for NAP coverage is \$100/crop, not to exceed \$300/county and \$900 for multi-county producers.

In the event of a crop failure caused by natural disaster, the producer needs to notify the local FSA office within 15 days of the date the damage became apparent.

Youth Loans

Remember FSA makes operating loans to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H Clubs, FFA, or a similar organization or with a vocational teacher or county extension agent. The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) can make and guarantee loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family size farms and ranches. Funds specifically for these loans are reserved each year. A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asians and Pacific Islanders. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager or Officer for more details and assistance in applying.

Sodbuster, Swampbuster

Most Farm Service Agency programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation system.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in the fields.