



April 2008

Farm Service Agency

# Orleans County News

**Farm Service Agency**  
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**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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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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William Ryan  
Darryl Mongeon

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## **Farm Storage Facility Loans**

Low cost loans for storage facilities are available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, rice, soybeans and corn. The seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Eligible facilities include new conventional-type cribs or bins and new and remanufactured oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures. All Farm Storage Facility Loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85 percent of the net cost of the storage or handling equipment, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A down payment is also required, so for more info call your FSA office.

## **Sign-up for DDAP III Ends May 5th**

Eligible dairy producers who suffered production losses in 2006 or 2007 have until May 5 to submit an application to receive benefits under the Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment Program III. In addition to the production summaries you should have received from your milk handler, you will need to provide us with average cow numbers for the base years of 2003 and 2004 and the disaster years of 2006 and 2007.

More information on the Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment Program III is available at your local county FSA office, or on-line at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

## **Farm Bill Extended Until April 18<sup>th</sup>**

Passage of the farm bill, currently being debated by Congress, has been delayed, requiring a 33-day extension that was recently passed and signed by President George W. Bush.

"America's farmers deserve better than a series of short-term extensions here of our current law," says Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer. "They need to know what farm policy is going to be so that they can make sound business decisions about what to plant this year and how they are going to finance it."

The current farm bill will now extend to April 18. Congress will have until that date to pass a consolidated bill.

## **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 Noninsured 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.

## **Direct and Guaranteed Loans**

The Farm Service Agency 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 available now. 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. Loan funds can be made available. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

Most of our loan programs have special funding available for minority, female and beginning farmers. 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.

## **Banking Changes?**

If you have changed banks and not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers, there could be problems. 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 is important that any changes in producer's account such as type account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible payment delay.

## **NASS Still Accepting Ag Census**

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years and the deadline for producers to turn the forms in was Feb. 4. However a large number of the census forms have not been returned according to National Agricultural Statistics Service Deputy Administrator Carol House. She says they're waiting for the rest of them and will give farmers until June 1 to turn them in.

"We are sending another form out there again with encouragement to fill it out," House says. "We'll give a little bit of time and then we're going to start calling people. Of course calling costs money, it's tax payer dollars, so hopefully producers out there will go ahead and fill it out before we have to make a phone call."

Responding to the census is required by law and the privacy of answers given is protected.

"If a producer is not filling it out because they have a question, they're not quite sure how to go about it, they're not sure whether they're required to fill it out or not, please call," House says. "We've received 130,000 calls since census forms were sent out."

A toll-free help line is available at (888) 424-7828. The census can also be submitted online at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).

## **Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers**

FSA has funding to assist 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 than 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.

## **Reporting Crop Acreage**

The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Also crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported. Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers are required to file reports by 6/15 for small grains and 7/15 for all other crops. Prevented Planting needs to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date. Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

## **FREE Soil and Manure Sampling Workshop**

The Orleans County Conservation District is pleased to announce a free workshop to farmers/landowners who would like to learn how to take soil samples and work with the resulting recommendations to obtain the best value from the nutrients in their manure. The workshop will include a step by step demonstration of collecting soil samples, filling out the questionnaire, and reading the analytical results. Also the proper sampling techniques for both solid/semisolid and liquid manure will be covered. Farmers may also sign up to borrow a soil probe, request maps of their fields, request calibration of their manure spreader using scales, and learn more about how to identify if Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAPs) are being followed on the farm. The workshop will be held on April 23 at the Jacques Couture farm in Westfield from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM. Call now to sign up and get directions: Marybeth Whitten: 334-8325 ex 22 or Susan Alexander 229-2720. Bring a bag lunch (drinks and snack provided) and good weather.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



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### **Rural Youth Loans**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (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 and 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. Contact your local FSA office for more details.

### **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.

### **NRCS Program Announcement for CSP – Conservation Security Program**

#### **VERMONT FARMERS INVITED TO HARVEST REWARDS FROM THEIR LAND STEWARDSHIP**

#### **Mississquoi Watershed farmers can sign-up for federal Conservation Security Program April 18 through May 16**

COLCHESTER, Vt. (March 28, 2008) – Vermont farmers with land in the Mississquoi watershed and who practice good soil and water conservation are encouraged to contact their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to determine if they are eligible to sign-up for the Conservation Security Program (CSP). Sign-up begins April 18 and continues through May 16.

Approximately 700 farmers and nearly 171,740 acres of land in Vermont is potentially eligible for CSP this year. CSP is offered nationwide on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private, agricultural working lands and rewards those producers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations.

Farmers are encouraged to call or visit their local USDA service center for additional CSP information; locations are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Payments can include three components: 1) an annual stewardship component for the base level of conservation treatment, 2) an annual component for maintenance of existing conservation practices, and 3) an enhancement component for exceptional conservation effort. Enhancement activities could include limited pesticide applications, renewable energy generation, and widening existing riparian forest buffers for restoring critical stream habitat.

To apply for CSP, NRCS asks potential participants to complete a CSP self-assessment workbook – available on the web or from local NRCS offices – to find out if their operation meets the requirements of the program and qualifies for program participation.

The self-assessment process is completed using a self-screening questionnaire for each land use to be enrolled. When this process is completed, the producer submits the CSP workbook to the local NRCS office during the sign-up period and meets with NRCS personnel to go over any additional needed documentation. NRCS will then determine if eligibility requirements are met and provide options for the producer's decision on enrollment category placement. Eligible land uses include but aren't limited to cropland, hayland, pasture, and sugarbushes.

NRCS held the first CSP sign-up in 2004. This announcement brings the number of watersheds enrolled to 331 across the nation, covering 247.7 million acres that have been eligible for the program.

### **FSA Signature Requirements**

Proper signatures on Farm Service Agency contracts, applications and forms must be submitted before the document will be considered as filed. All entities, including revocable and irrevocable trusts, corporations, partnerships, estates, etc., must provide evidence of signature authority stipulating those individuals who are authorized to represent the entity. FSA cannot accept signatures without such documentation on file. Examples of acceptable evidence include trust agreements, corporate charters or resolutions, partnership agreements and court orders of appointment. Spouses can sign for one another on most program documents unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office staff. For more information about appropriate signature authority, please contact your local FSA county office.

### **Extending Wool, Mohair, Unshorn Pelt, and Honey MALs & LDPs**

The Farm Bill extension signed by the President on December 26, 2007, authorized the MAL and LDP programs for the 2008 crop of graded and ungraded wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts through March 15, 2008. On March 14, 2008, S. 2745 was signed into law, and subsequently authorizes FSA to continue administering 2008 crop wool, mohair, and unshorn pelt MALs and LDPs through **April 18, 2008**.

Because the availability date for 2008 crop honey begins on April 1, 2008, FSA County Offices are authorized to accept 2008 honey MAL and LDP requests from April 1, 2008 through April 18, 2008.