



Rutland/Bennington County News

SURE Signup

Signup for the 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments program (SURE) began on January 4, 2010. SURE 2008 is for those who suffered crop production losses during crop year 2008.

SURE provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or crop quality losses. The program takes into consideration crop losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to 60 percent of the difference between the SURE farm guarantee and total farm revenue. The farm guarantee is based on the amount of crop insurance and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on the farm. Total farm revenue takes into account the actual value of production on the farm as well as insurance indemnities and certain farm program payments.

Producers with a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. Producers must meet the risk management purchase requirement by either obtaining a policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, for all economically significant crops. For 2008 crops, producers had the opportunity to obtain a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement through a buy-in provision. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

Rutland and Bennington Counties were declared eligible under Secretarial Disaster Designation for 2008. For SURE, a farm is defined as all crops in which a producer had an interest nationwide. For more information on the new SURE program, please call or visit the county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Richard Sheldon! Dick was re-elected to represent farmers from LAA #1 on the county committee. Dick was elected to his 2nd consecutive term. The election results for Local Administrative Area #1 are:

Richard Sheldon — Elected to the county committee (COC),
Jeffrey Noble — 1st alternate to COC
Martha Hayward — 2nd alternate to COC

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members held their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman. The following are the results:

Chairperson – David Seward
Vice Chairperson – Richard Sheldon

COC meets every month on the second Wednesday at 10:30 AM in the USDA Conference Room. The public has access to regular session minutes.

FSA Signature Policy

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.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may **not** sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact the county FSA office.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree. Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to starting thinking about filing taxes. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement.

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Rutland/Bennington County FSA

170 S Main St STE 4
Rutland, VT 05701-4559
802-775-8034
800-300-6927 (VT)
802-773-4177 (FAX)
802-253-0191 (TDD)

Hours

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

County Committee

David Seward, , Chair
Richard Sheldon, Vice Chair
Richard P Browe
Karl Strohmaier
Clifton Cressy

Minority Advisor

Cristine Carabeau

Upcoming County Committee Meeting Dates

February 17, 2010
March 17, 2010

Staff

Diane Heleba, PT X 10
Marge Christy, PT X 12
Michelle Smith, SCEP X 13

Co. Executive Director

Phyllis L Torrey X 11

Farm Loan Staff

802-388-6748 (Middlebury)
1-888-408-3783 (Loans)

Farm Loan Manager

Gary Braman

Loan Officers

David Girard
Jill Cioffi-Thomas

Farm Loan Staff is in the Rutland Service Center by appointment— Ext 22

NRCS Staff

George Tucker, Acting DC X 14
Steve Pytlik X 18
Sally Eugair X 16
Les Wright X 23
Corinne Matarese X 21
Carla Fenner X 26

Rutland NRCD Staff

Nanci McGuire X 17

Poultney-Mettowee NRCD

Marli Rupe 287-8339

Bennington NRCD

Shelly Stiles 442-2275

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

Dates to Remember	
January 1	New Committee member took office
January 4	SURE Signup began
February 12	Grassland Reserve Program ends (1 st round of ranking)
February 15	Office Closed for President's Day
March 31	BCAP Closes
April 15	Tree Order for RCNRC
June 1	2010 DCP/ACRE Enrollment ends
Ongoing	Conservation Reserve Program/ CREP
	Farm Storage Facility Loan
	Milk Income Loss Contract

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

ARC Loans Through SBA

Section 506 of the Recovery Act authorized the Small Business Administration (SBA) to help viable small businesses make payments on existing debt. The ARC loan program is designed to give viable small businesses facing immediate financial hardship some temporary financial relief so that they can keep operating and get their cash flow back on track. The SBA is now reaching out to farmers in Vermont with this loan program that is available until September 30, 2010, or until the appropriate funds run out, whichever comes first.

- An ARC loan is up to \$35,000
- ARC loans will be disbursed during the first six months followed by a 12 month period of no repayment by the borrower, followed by a repayment period of five years.
- 100% guaranteed backed by the SBA
- Proceeds may be used to repay mortgages, secured and unsecured loans, lines of credit, credit cards and other accounts payables.
- No collateral required
- Eligible SBA lenders can participate.

This is another source of credit for borrowers, farmers that may be near the FSA limits.

For further information go to: <http://www.sba.gov/recovery>. The local SBA office in Montpelier can be reached at 1-802-828-4422.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs 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.

NRCS Personnel News

After 30 years of employment with NRCS, Jenny Kimberly has retired from Bennington County. Following 32 years of NRCS employment, with 20 of those in Rutland, William R "Bill" Forbes has also retired.

We wish Jenny and Bill long and happy retirements.

Carla Fenner, formerly a Land Treatment Planner in ST Albans, has joined the Rutland Staff. She is to be working with Bennington County farmers and landowners. Welcome Carla!

Tree and Shrub Seedling Sale

Trees beautify our surroundings, increase property values, and help save energy. For these reasons and others the Rutland Natural Resources Conservation District (a non-profit organization) is offering a spring planting program. All stock is bare root and is being offered at a reasonable cost. It is best to plant bare-root trees immediately, in order to keep the fragile roots from drying out. The District has been offering this program for over 10 years and has sold over 20,000 plants.

Some of what is available are: Balsam Fir, Fraser Fir, Blue Spruce, White Spruce, White Pine, and Red, Oak, Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Birch, Elderberry, Cranberry, Lilac, Nannyberry and Dogwood, Apple, and Pear trees. Strawberry, Blueberry, Raspberry and Asparagus plants are also available.

Orders will be taken until April 15, 2010, or until supplies last, so order early! This sale helps to generate funds to support the District's many programs. For further information, or an order form, please contact Nanci McGuire at the Rutland District office 802-775-8034 ext. 17 or visit <http://www.vacd.org/rcd>.

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. All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent 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 reporting requirements.