



Windham County News

**Windham County
USDA Service Center**
28 Vernon St.
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802 254-9766 phone
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www.fsa.usda.gov

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

FSA Staff
County Executive Director
Julie Jacque (x107)
Julie.Jacque@vt.usda.gov

Program Technician
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Dana.Ruppert@usda.gov

Farm Loan Staff
George Button, Jr. FLM
802-295-7942 x15
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*George is in Windham Co.
Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the
month or by appointment*

County Committee
Charles Robb Jr., Chair
Peter Barrett, Vice Chair
Jill Adams Mancivalno

*County Committee meets
2nd Thursday of the Month*

NRCS Staff
Charles Armstrong x101
Chuck.Armstrong@vt.usda.gov

NRC District Staff
Jolene Hamilton, Mgr.x104
Sylvia Harris x105

Julie's Notes

It is maple sugaring time and spring is on the way! I'd like to welcome Charlie Robb Jr. as our new Windham County COC Chair and Peter Barrett as the new Vice Chair.

There has also been a change in NRCS staff. Chuck Armstrong, our new soil conservationist, comes to this office from Windsor/Orange County. Please note his contact information to the left.

Producers - don't forget the approaching NAP deadline of March 15 to purchase insurance on your annual vegetable and commodity crops.

And please consider the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as the snow begins to melt and run-off, erosion, invasive species etc. become evident on your farm. We'll be reaching out to producers to discuss the CRP and opportunities for conservation projects. Look for more info about the CRP in our next newsletter.



Sign-Up for NAP Coverage on Spring-Seeded Annuals

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is a federally funded program that provides insurance coverage for crops that are not available for traditional crop insurance, such as certain nuts, forage crops, fruits and vegetables including: garlic, peaches, lettuce, kale and other greens, tomatoes, cabbage, squash, peppers, leeks etc. NAP insurance can protect you if you experience low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting due to natural weather events/disasters.

Producers must have insurance in order to remain eligible for other USDA Disaster Assistance Programs such as SURE, LFP, TAP and ELAP. The cost of NAP insurance is \$250/crop for a maximum cost of \$750 per producer per county.

Applications for NAP insurance on annual crops are due by March 15, 2010.

SURE Program Available

Applications for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) are being taken for losses suffered in the 2008 Crop Year. SURE provides benefits for farm-revenue losses due to natural disaster that were incurred starting in the 2008 crop year and through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop or NAP insurance on all crops of economic significance in all counties, except for grazed acreage.

A producer may be eligible for a SURE payment if the following conditions are met:

- a crop of economic significance suffers a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition
- a crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm
- the farm experiencing the loss must be in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties
- those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are also eligible to receive SURE payments for production losses or crop quality losses

Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss. **Some producers may be exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.**

A sample calculator for SURE is available at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sure_calc_ulator_2008.xls



UPCOMING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

3/9/10

Going the Whole Grain: Northern Grain Growers Assoc. Meeting

UVM Davis Center
Burlington, VT

6th annual grain growing conference offers a diverse array of educational topics such as: blending feed rations from homegrown grains & forages, weed control, raising specialty crops, and soil management.

Time: 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

Cost: \$40 non-members

Contact: Erica Cummings

UVM Extension

(802) 524-6501 or

eecummin@uvm.edu

3/24/10

2010 Vermont Forage Days

Springfield, VT

This seminar highlights the most recent info on crop and forage production and quality including: newest grasses & legumes for pasture/forage, pest & weed management, short season corn hybrids & more. Fee includes admission, lunch & handouts.

Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Cost: \$20 per attendee/ \$30 per farm

RSVP: Anne Marie Resnik

UVM Extension

(802) 656-0463 or

pss@uvm.edu

Now until 4/12/10

Conservation District Annual Plant Sale

Brattleboro, VT

The Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District is holding its 20th annual plant sale. Trees and plants that thrive in southern VT are available including: conifers, hardwoods, fruit trees, wild-life/songbird shrubs & trees, as well as fruits, vegetables and spring perennials.

Order pickup takes place on 4/24 from 9am to noon at the Trade & Industrial Center in Brattleboro.

Contact: Jolene Hamilton

Windham County NRCD

(802) 254-5323 ex 104 or

jolene.hamilton@vt.nacdnet.net

DCP Sign-Up Continues

Signup for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) is underway and will continue through June 1, 2010.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices.

For 2010, producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm.

ACRE Program – A Different Approach to Commodity Programs

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. The deadline for application is June 1, 2010.

Under ACRE, a producer's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a five-year average state yield and the most recent two-year national price for each eligible commodity, as opposed to a standardized national yield as used in DCP calculations. For 2010, the two-year price average will be based on the 2008 and 2009 crop years.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. If enrolled in ACRE instead of DCP, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20% and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30%.

If you choose to sign up for this program, you do not have to enroll all of your farms. Once a farm is enrolled in ACRE, though, it will remain enrolled for that initial crop year and through the 2012 crop year. Additionally, the owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE.



Honey Loans for Producers

Honey loans are a type of marketing assistance loan. The national loan rate for honey is \$0.69 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate, so LDPs are not available at this time.

To be eligible for a loan, the producer must have produced honey in the United States during the calendar year for which the loan is requested; extracted the honey on or before Dec. 31 of the applicable crop year; have continuous beneficial interest in the honey through date of repayment of the loan; and been responsible for the financial risk of beekeeping. Honey loans are available until March 31, 2010.

Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm-stored honey during the term of the loan. The containers must be marked with the producer's name, type of honey, number of container and net weight. Pre-loan inspections are required before the loans can be disbursed. Please call the office at 254-9766 x 2 for more info.

SBA Offers Loan Program for Farmers

The ARC loan program is designed to help viable small businesses facing immediate financial hardship make payments on existing debt and provide some temporary financial relief. The program is administered by the Small Business Administration (SBA), and authorized in Section 506 of the Recovery Act. The ARC loan is another source of credit for borrowers, including farmers, who may be near the FSA limits.

The program deadline is September 30, 2010 or until funds run out.

- 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.

More details can be found on the SBA website at: <http://www.sba.gov/recovery> or by calling the SBA office in Montpelier at (802) 828-4422.



Adjusted Gross Income Verification

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. *No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to USDA.*

The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15, 2010 to avoid interruption of program benefits. Forms may be obtained from the FSA/NRCS office or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet>

Please call the USDA Service Center if you have any questions at (802) 254-9766.

FSA Payment Record (1099-G)

Producers who have received payments from FSA should have received a CCC-1099-G form. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to producers during the previous calendar year, and is to help participating producers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the program participant's responsibility to report income to the IRS.

When the CCC-1099-G is received, it should be checked with your records to see that the amounts are correct. Refunds will no longer be reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database. Program participants with an eAuthentication user ID and password may access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports".

Actively Engaged in Farming

USDA has amended 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 legal 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 cannot exceed \$40,000.

Sodbuster & Swampbuster Compliance

FSA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions, which 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 (NRCS).

Swampbuster provisions stipulate that converting a wetland to plant crops may result in the loss of all USDA benefits. It is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting work in the fields.

Also, 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.

For more info, contact Chuck Armstrong, NRCS Soil Conservationist at 254-9766 x 101.

DATES TO REMEMBER

3/15/10 2010 Annual crop sales closing date for NAP and RMA insurances (spring-seeded annual crops including corn, kale, lettuce, beans, pumpkins, peppers, squash, garlic etc.)

3/31/10 Closing date for Honey Loans

4/12/10 Last day to place orders for the Windham County NRCD plant/tree sale

4/15/10 Deadline to file tax returns

Ongoing

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) sign-up

Loans for Beginning and Youth Farmers

Loan Assistance for annual operating costs, livestock, equipment, bridge loans for projects etc.

Windham County FSA Office
 28 Vernon St., STE 331
 Brattleboro, VT 05301



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Return Service Requested



Don't forget about **FSA loan programs** if you're thinking of borrowing for spring seeding, need operating capital, to make investments in equipment and/or infrastructure or for other business needs. Rates are extremely competitive – please see March rates below.

Please call the office at 254-9766 x 2 for more information or if you like to receive a loan package.

MARCH Interest Rates

Farm Operating – Direct.....	3.000%
Farm Ownership – Direct.....	5.125%
Farm Ownership – Direct, Joint Financing.....	5.000%
Farm Ownership – Down Payment.....	1.500%
Emergency Loan – Amount of Actual Loss.....	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan CCC-185 (As of 2/26)	
7 year.....	3.125%
10 year.....	3.625%
12 year.....	4.000%

Farm First – Vermont's Dairy Producer Assistance Program

The Farm First Program provides short-term counseling for any problem or concern faced by VT dairy producers and household members including: legal and financial issues, depression, medical, relationship, disability, stress, childcare and conflict resolution. The program also offers resource and/or referral information on any issue. Farm First is confidential and FREE. **The dairy producer access number to call is 1-877-493-6216.**

This program is sponsored by the VT Agency of Agriculture, UVM Extension, Vermont Farm Health Task Force and a consortium of businesses and non-profit organizations concerned about the well-being of Vermont dairy producers and their families. For a complete list of sponsors visit: www.vermontagriculture.com

You can also learn more about the Farm First program by visiting: www.investeap.org and entering the password: "dairy" in the upper right-hand log-in section.



Visit FSA's web site at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

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