Windsor-Orange County Updates

April/May 2009

Farm Service Agency
28 Farmvu Drive
White River Junction, VT
05001

Phone (802) 295-7942
Fax (802) 296-3654
www.fsa.usda.gov

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

County Committee
Paul Doton, Chair
Heidi Dolloff, Vice Chair
Sandra Whitney, member
Agnes Spaulding, member
Mike Emerson, member

COC meets 3rd Wednesday of each month at 10:00 am

County Executive Director
Christine Lary, ext 13
Christine.lary@vt.usda.gov

Program Staff
Eric Winchester, ext 10

Farm Loan Staff
George Button Jr., ext 15

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Disaster Buy-In Waiver Extension

Producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) **coverage for 2008** can pay a buy-in fee through **May 18, 2009**, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Farmers have an additional opportunity to become eligible for several programs if they suffered 2008 agricultural losses due to natural disaster.

If you have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), you are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

- Pay a $100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is $300 per county, per producer, not to exceed $900 for multi-county producers.
- In the case of each insurable crop, excluding grazing land, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.
- In the case of each noninsurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable state application closing date for the next available year.

Those who choose to "buy in" under this provision will be considered, for insured crops, to have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for the 2008 crop year at a level of coverage not to exceed 70 percent of the yield at 100 percent of the price. For noninsurable crops, producers will be considered to have a level of coverage equal to 70 percent of the yield. These levels of coverage will be used to calculate the 2008 SURE guarantee.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the buy-in fee.

Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. 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. Acreage reports are to be certified by **June 30 for small grains** and **July 15 for all other crops**.

NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2009 production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date**

DCP Signup – Advance payments available on owned land or long term leased land

Signup has started for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program and continues until August 14, 2009. This deadline is mandatory for all participants. FSA will not accept late-filed applications.

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 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its statutorily set target price.

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.

United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency
Windsor-Orange FSA Office
28 Farmvu Drive
White River Junction, VT 05001-6001

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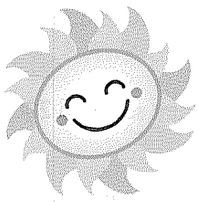

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Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers

FSA has a program 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 that 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 information, loan applications, and other materials are available by calling the loan staff toll free at 1-866-241-2190 (Orange County) or 800 789-6713 (Windsor/Windham County) or you may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov .

Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The following are the different reconstitution methods used.

- **Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;
- **Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. There are additional requirements
- **DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;
- **Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Farm Storage Needed? — April interest rate is 2.5%.

Low cost loans for storage facilities are available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, soybeans and corn. (Storage for haylage is not eligible at this time) 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. For details, contact the county office staff.

CREP & Continuous CRP Available

At this time USDA has no general signups scheduled for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 2009. However, environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Re serve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Continuous CRP will still be eligible for enrollment. These targeted programs remain funded, and continue to provide a heightened environmental benefit on select areas.

If payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded. See your local FSA office for details.

Dates to Remember

May 18	NAP 2008 Buy-in deadline
May 25	Memorial Day – Office closed
June 30	Acreage reporting deadline for small grains
July 3	Independence Day (observed) – Office closed
July 15	Acreage reporting deadline for all other crops
Aug 14	DCP enrollment deadline
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
Continues	Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) sign-up