



# Words of Windham **FSA**

January 2009

A Newsletter For People Who Care About Agriculture

## DCP Sign Up

Sign-up has started for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program for farms with base acres. You can sign up online or at your local Farm Service Agency Office. Sign up will continue until June 1, 2009.

Producers who are eligible for the DCP Program will also be eligible to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue (ACRE) Program. The enrollment period for the ACRE Program will begin in the spring. You may first enroll in the DCP Program, receive direct payment and then later modify your enrollment to include the ACRE program or you may wait to enroll in DCP and ACRE at the same time in Spring 2009.

## MILC Sign Up Underway

The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorizes the MILC Program, which operates similarly to the counter-cyclical payment program for crops, and makes three key changes in program operation. Under the Farm Bill, the MILC payment rate and the per-operation poundage limit are modified, depending on when the milk is produced. In addition, a "feed cost adjuster," is introduced over the life of the 2008 Act, which adjusts the \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt.) benchmark price upward depending on the cost of feed rations. When available, MILC payments are based on a payment rate percentage that is multiplied by the difference between a now-flexible target (\$16.94 per cwt. or higher) and the specific month's Boston Class I price of milk.

The 2008 Farm Bill made changes to the provisions for payment eligibility and adjusted gross income (AGI). If the individual or entity has non-farm AGI greater than \$500,000, the individual or entity is not eligible for MILC benefits.

## County Committee Elections

On December 4th 2008 the county committee met to count the ballots to determine who would hold the three year term for LAA 3. Betsy Molodich was elected to fill the three year term and Jean Palazzi is alternate. On January 15th the county committee will meet to determine who will hold the position of Chair, Vice Chair & Regular member. The new slate will be announced in the February edition of Words of Windham.

## New Disaster Programs

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 was enacted on June 18, 2008 which created several new disaster programs. To be eligible for these programs, producers must purchase at least **CAT** level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and or **NAP** coverage for non insurable crops. If you missed the deadline for insurable crops, a waiver will be accepted. The new programs are Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (**SURE**) Program, **TAP**, & Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (**ELAP**). Call for more information.

## Pork Check Off Referendum

Eligible producers and importers will be able to participate from December 8, 2008 through January 12, 2009. Participation is voluntary and only the individuals who desire a referendum on the Pork Check Off Program should participate. Contact the office for eligibility requirements and the proper paperwork to complete and return. All paperwork and supporting documentation must be returned by 4:30 PM on January 12, 2009.

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## Changes in Payment Limitations

For commodity and disaster programs, the AGI limitation was reduced from \$2.5 million AGI from all sources to a three-year average non-farm AGI of \$500,000 such that a person or entity shall not be eligible for such programs if the non-farm AGI exceeds \$500,000. Also, under the new regulations, an individual or entity must have a 3-year average AGI less than or equal to \$750,000 per year from farm income in order to qualify for direct payments issued under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

The definition of income derived from farming, ranching and forestry operations was expanded to include, among other items, such items as the packing, storing and transporting of agricultural commodities; production of livestock products; farm-based production of renewable bio-energy; and in some instances, the providing of operational inputs to farmers, ranchers and foresters.

For conservation programs, the average nonfarm AGI limitation is \$1 million or less for eligibility with allowances for certain exceptions.

Individuals and entities must be "actively engaged in farming" with respect to a farming operation in order to be eligible for specified payments and benefits. To be "actively engaged in farming," the individual or entity must make significant contributions to the farming operation of: (1) capital, equipment, land, or a combination; and (2) personal labor or active personal management, or a combination.

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**P.O. Box 399, Brooklyn, CT 06234**  
**PH: 860-774-8397 x 1,**  
**<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>**

### **OFFICE STAFF:**

**Dawn S. Pindell**, County Executive Director x 109  
**Diane C. Holowaty**, Program Technician x 111  
**Sarah M. Phaiah**, Program Technician x110  
**Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Ron Clark**, Farm Loan Manager  
860-887-9941 x 105

### **COUNTY COMMITTEE:**

**Harold Bishop**, Chairman  
**Betsy Molodich**,  
Vice-Chairman  
**Charles Tyler**,  
Regular Member

## Energy Saving & Renewable Energy Programs

January 14th 2009  
12:30-4:30pm

Eastern CT State University  
Willimantic

Agricultural Producers and Small Business Owners learn how to save energy money, how CT Clean Energy Fund & CT Energy Efficiency Funds can help and how to find financing.

Vendors will be on site to discuss alternative energy solutions.

Contact USDA Rural Development at 1-860-859-5218 ext 201 to make a reservation and get directions.