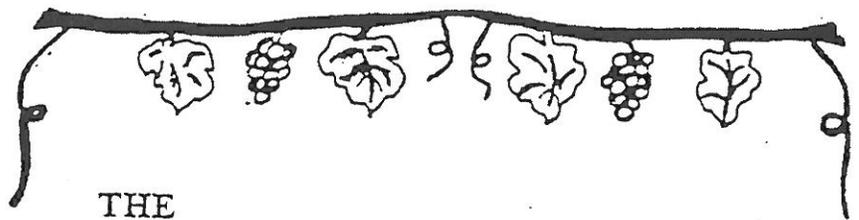




GRAFTON COUNTY FSA OFFICE
250 Swiftwater Road
Woodsville, NH 03785
603-747-3751

FSA Office Staff:
Steven Schmidt, CED
Tara Hamlett, PT
Joanne Fullerton, PT

County FSA Committee:
David Clement, Chairperson
Jacqueline Lewis, Vice Chairperson
John Metcalf, Regular Member



THE GRAPEVINE

GRAFTON COUNTY FSA NEWS NOTES

COC Meets 3rd Thursday of
Every month at 11:30 am.

February 17, 2010

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to John Metcalf! John was elected to represent farmers from Piermont, Orford, Lyme, Hanover, Lebanon, Canaan, Enfield, Orange, and Grafton. The election results for Local Administrative Area #3 are:

John Metcalf- Elected to the county committee (COC)

Shirley Tullar – 1st 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.

SURE

Sign-up to participate in the new Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments program (SURE) that was contained in the 2008 Farm Bill began January 4, 2010.

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. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to 60% 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.

To be eligible for SURE, producers must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. In addition, 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. If you have any questions, please give us a call at (603) 747-3751 extension 2 for the Farm Service Agency.

ACRE

The Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) 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. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For 2010, the 2-year price 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. The payment is based on 83.3 percent of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the State ACRE guarantee and the rate revenue times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield. The total number of planted acres for which a producer may receive ACRE payments may not exceed the total base on the farm. In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

Anyone choosing to enroll must do so by June 1, 2010. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

DCP

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment (DCP) Program for farms with base acres will continue until June 1, 2010. USDA 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, eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm.

BCAP

Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) provides financial assistance to eligible material owners that deliver eligible biomass material to qualified biomass conversion facilities for use as heat, power, bio-based products or bio-fuels. Initial assistance will be for the Collection, Harvest, Storage and Transportation (CHST) costs associated with the delivery of eligible materials.

There is a temporary hold on new applications. However, applications approved thru February 3, 2010 will be paid.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act 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.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land (including forestland) in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

Producers who have purchased the NAP coverage must keep in mind that they need to give us their 2009 final production. Once we receive your final production, we can then calculate your actual production history (APH). You still have time to get us this information but the sooner the better.

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.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) can make and guarantee loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family size farms and ranches. Funds specifically for these loans are reserved each year. A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asians and Pacific Islanders. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager at (603) 223-6003.

Applications for FSA Loans

Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA farm loan manager at (603) 223-6003 for more details and assistance in applying.

Youth Loans

Remember FSA makes operating loans up to \$5,000 to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing agriculturally related projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, 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.

Farm Reconstitutions

In FSA 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 reconstitution-or recon is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm reconstitution:

- 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. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding.
- Cropland Method – the division of bases in the same proportion that the cropland for each resulting tract relates to the cropland base on the parent tract;

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

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 staff 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.

Spousal Signatures

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.

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.

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

March 15, 2010	Closing date for 2010 NAP coverage for spring seeded crops
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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.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
250 Switzer Road
Woodsville, NH 03785

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