



January 2009

# Rhode Island County Farm Service Agency

## Rhode Island County FSA

60 Quaker Lane Suite 49  
Warwick, RI 02886

### Hours

Monday-Friday  
8:00 AM-4:30 PM

### Phone

401-828-3120 Option 2  
Farm Loan: Option 9  
Fax: 401-821-0780

### County Committee

Ruth James  
Vincent Confreda  
Victor Hoogendoorn  
George Goulart  
James Steere

### County Office Staff

Melissa Turrisi, CED  
Anne Belleville, PT  
Devon Marsden, PT  
Leila Naylor, PT

### Farm Loan Staff

Roxanne Boisse, FLM  
Katie Ryan, FLO  
Sandy Ford, PT  
Olawale Alesh, SCEP

## DCP Signup Underway

Sign-up has started for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program for farms with base acres. You can signup online or at local USDA service centers. Signup will continue until June 1, 2009. The June 1, 2009 deadline is mandatory for all participants. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program and can be accessed at [www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp). To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

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. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

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

## MILC Signup Underway

Signup for the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC) is underway and will continue through the program's expiration date, Sept. 30, 2012.

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.

For more information on the MILC program, contact your local USDA Service Center.

## 2009 Crop Year Wool, Mohair, and Unshorn Pelt Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL's) and LDP's.

The Farm Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 authorizes the MAL and LDP programs for the 2008 through 2012 crops graded and ungraded wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts.

The 2009 crop year for wool and mohair begins January 1 and ends December 31, 2009.

Were on the  
Web!

[www.usda.fsa.gov](http://www.usda.fsa.gov)

Eligible producers have until Jan. 30, 2009, to apply for LDPs for unshorn pelts produced during the 2008 crop year. Eligible producers must have beneficial interest in the pelts, owned the lamb for at least 30 calendar days before the date of slaughter and sell the unshorn lamb for immediate slaughter.

Wool and mohair producers can apply for a payment subsidy on their 2009 wool and mohair. The LDP (loan deficiency payment) must be requested before the wool/mohair is sold. A producer must have beneficial interest (ownership) in the commodity to be eligible. It is extremely important that if you are selling your commodity directly from the field, you have signed page 1 of CCC-633 "Direct Loan Deficiency Payment Agreement" in our office before the wool is sold. If the wool is going to be stored for a period of time before being sold, you can request your payment by completing form CCC-633 LDP "Loan Deficiency Payment Certification and Application" After you shear but Before you lose control of the commodity. If you have any questions please call the county office.

To view the current LDP rates please visit [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/mktpriclean1.xls](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/mktpriclean1.xls)

Producers must also comply with wetland conservation and highly erodible land conservation provisions on all lands they operate or have interest in.

To qualify for payment, pelts must have been produced by an eligible producer from live unshorn lambs of domestic origin in the United States.

## Continuous CRP

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources. Continuous CRP program participation is voluntary.

Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements.

Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments or local Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) availability, please contact your local FSA office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crpcont03.htm>.

## USDA Enacts Changes to Payment Limitations, Income Qualifications, and Implements Direct Attribution

USDA recently published an interim final regulation in the Federal Register announcing changes to both Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) qualifications, program payment limitations, and direct attribution for FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs, which became effective in accordance with the 2008 Farm Bill.

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.

Public comments on this interim final rule must be submitted to the Department by within 30 days of the date of publication.

### 2009 NAP Signup Deadline

#### March 15, 2009 NAP Closing Date

March 15 is the deadline date for producers to apply for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or NAP, coverage using CCC-471, Application for Coverage, and pay the service fee at the county office. The application and service fee must be filed by March 15, the application closing date for 2009 spring seed crops along with vegetables.

The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$500 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$750 per producer with farming interest in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees.

To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or share-cropper who share in the risk of producing an eligible crop.

## USDA Designates five Rhode Island Counties as Natural Disaster Area

USDA has designated Providence and Washington counties as primary disaster areas with contiguous counties of Bristol, Kent, and Newport counties as natural disaster areas which were recently declared a primary disaster area because of losses caused by excessive rain and high winds that occurred from July 23, 2008, through August 31, 2008.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas Dec. 31, 2008, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

## Conservation Compliance

Highly erodible land (HEL) compliance is still required to earn program benefits. This includes payments under DCP, Conservation Reserve Program, loan deficiency payments, farm loan program, crop insurance, and many other USDA programs. Farms with HEL soils need to be aware of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements spelled out in conservation plans. If you have any questions, stop by NRCS today. Take the time now to make sure your farm is in compliance!

## Attention Producers & Land Owners

Do you intend to clear native areas to create or expand existing crop areas?

Are you converting a pasture into a crop field?

Are there areas on your farm (s), which you are considering cropping, which have not been cropped in recent years?

Is there a wet spot in a field which you want to drain to make cropping easier?

Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?

Are you doing anything different on your farm (s) this year?

These are **Highly Erodible and Wetland provision** questions which need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any questions or concern that something you plan to do on your farm could jeopardize your eligibility for benefits, please contact your NRCS representative before you begin work.

## 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.

There are exceptions to the rule. Spouses may not sign FSA-211s on behalf of each other or sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Spouses must have a power of attorney on file or sign personally for claim settlements, such as promissory notes, and on security documents for price support loans.

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

A spouse's authority to sign documents on behalf of the other spouse does not entitle the spouse to review or receive agency records of the other spouse.

## 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.

## Controlled Substances

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.

## Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This innovation has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. It has been calculated that having a problem with a payment is 20 times greater with checks than with Direct Deposit. Another benefit is that Direct Deposit to your account can be made within 48 hours.

To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

## Over \$7 Million Dollars in Natural Resource Grants is Available for Private Agricultural and Private Forestry or Woodland Owners!

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) grants provide financial and technical assistance to develop and implement conservation plans that assist you with soil, water, air, plant, and animal concerns.

Contact NRCS via E-mail [NRCSInfo@ri.usda.gov](mailto:NRCSInfo@ri.usda.gov) or call 401-828-1300, ext. 8 to receive an information packet and application.

### Application Deadline: February 1, 2009

Attend an NRCS Workshop! Learn how NRCS can help you manage your farm, field, forest, wildlife, water or plant issues. The workshop will also provide valuable information on the application process, review process, and contract process.

**NRCS Workshops will be held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM:**

#### January 21, 2009

Chepachet Grange  
56 Victory Highway  
Chepachet, RI  
Call 949-1480 to register.

#### January 28, 2009

Eastern Conservation District Office  
(White Wine Plaza)  
2490 Main Street, Tiverton RI  
Call 624-7490 to register.

## County Committee Election

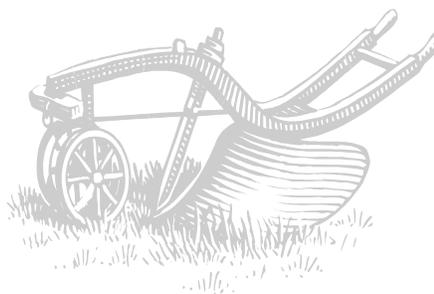
Thank you to all who participated in the County Committee Election in (Local Administrative Areas) LAA#3 and LAA#5 this year.

**Congratulations to: Ruth James-LAA#3 and George Goulart-LAA#5 for their re-election.**

### Why is the County Committee Important?

Committee members are a crucial component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on committees help decide the kind of programs their counties will offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

The newly-elected members and alternates take office January 1, 2009. The county committee meets the first Wednesday of each month.



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