



Caledonia/Essex County Updates

September 2009

Farm Service Agency
481 Summer St., Ste 201
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

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(802) 748-8746
1-800-862-1121
Fax (802) 748-1621
www.fsa.usda.gov

Hours

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

County Committee

Burt Patenaude, Chair
Robert Porter, Vice Chair
William Nelson, Member
Michael Tanguay, Member
Darcy Smart, Advisor

**COC meets 2nd Thursday
of each month at 10:30 am**

**County Executive
Director**

Patricia Passut, ext 104
patricia.passut@vt.usda.gov

Program Staff

Patty Matte, ext 100

Farm Loan Staff

**(802) 334-6090 or
1-866-241-2190** (toll free)
Brian Kuper, FLM
Dorcas McAllister, FLO
Meghan Dubois, FLO

NRCS Staff

www.nrcs.usda.gov
Tim McKay, ext 109
Nick Comerchi, ext 101
Jacob Clough, ext 117

NRCD Staff

Kerry O'Brien, ext 110
Tamara Stevens, ext 114
Brandon Carpenter, ext 106

Rural Development

www.rd.usda.gov
Steve Campbell, ext 102
Mark Koprowski, ext 120
Suzanne Smith, ext 112



Welcome Robert Paquin – New State Executive Director for Vermont FSA

The Obama Administration named Robert Paquin to serve as the State Executive Director (SED) for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Vermont. Robert Paquin has been working in Senator Leahy's Washington and Vermont offices since 1977. He was most recently Senator Leahy's Legislative Assistant for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment. Paquin was involved in the five Farm Bills dating back to 1985 and co-drafted legislation addressing forestry and Lake Champlain and related issues. He was born and raised in Vermont and attended the University of Vermont for both his undergraduate and graduate degrees.



Biomass Crop Assistance Program

FSA is currently accepting applications from biomass facilities interested in participating in the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP).

Once an agreement is signed between FSA and a facility and funding through the program is provided, the facilities can begin accepting materials. Producers who sell these materials can apply for matching payments under the collection, harvest, storage and transportation (CHST) component of BCAP.

The matching CHST payments are paid at a rate of \$1 for \$1 per dry-ton equivalent received from a qualified biomass conversion facility, not to exceed \$45 per dry-ton equivalent. A biomass owner is eligible to receive payments for two years. The purpose of the matching payments is to assist biomass producers with the CHST cost of delivering biomass to a qualified biomass conversion facility. Once a facility becomes qualified, eligible material owners or producers who deliver biomass to that facility may be eligible to receive CHST payments.

Eligible material owners or producers, who market eligible material to a qualified biomass conversion facility, may apply for the matching CHST payment at their FSA county office. An application must be submitted before the eligible material is sold and delivered to a qualified biomass conversion facility. After the product is delivered, a producer must provide FSA with documentation of product quantity, quality and payment rate. County offices will validate payment requests with information in the county office and information provided under the terms of MOUs with the qualified biomass conversion facilities. CHST payments will not be authorized until after an appropriate environmental analysis has been conducted.

Biomass conversion facilities and material owners or producers should contact their FSA state offices or visit www.fsa.usda.gov for more information

NAP Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

◆ The application deadline date for the 2010 NAP coverage for forage crops is Nov 20, 2009. ◆

Producers who already have coverage on 2009 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2010, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) or delete a crop(s) from previous year's coverage or changing crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee.

Producers with NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:

- Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.
- File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists 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. For additional program information, loan applications, and/or other loan material contact the FSA loan staff in Newport at 334-6090 or toll free in VT at 866-241-2190.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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Help Available to Stressed Farmers

In the past year, the economy, inclement weather, drought and other factors have hurt many farming operations around the country. These events pushed some farmers to the emotional breaking point. Watching their livelihood being threatened is difficult for farmers and ranchers and especially for those who care about them.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available to help. If you know a farmer or rancher who is under stress and is reluctant to ask for help, or if you just need to talk to someone, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Your call will be routed to the crisis center nearest you, where trained staffers are available 24/7. This nationwide service is free and confidential. Help is just a phone call away.

For more information, go to <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. This service is not affiliated with the US Department of Agriculture.

Locally, services are available to help at:

Rural & Agricultural VocRehab

Celebrating 40 years of service

Providing Services in Support of Employment to Vermonters with Health Conditions since 1968

~Personal Employment Plans ~ Counseling /Guidance~ ~Career Exploration ~ Equipment/Machine Adaptations~ ~Worksite modifications~ Information & Referral~

St. Johnsbury Office 397 Railroad St. 1-800-545-8920

Speak with **Melissa or Audrey**

www.uvm.edu/agvocrehab

~Dairy Crisis Hotline~

Dairy Farmers: Take Steps Now to Deal with the Milk Price Downturn!

In 2009, as milk prices continue to decline, and stay low while expenses do not, take steps now to adjust your business plans for this year and beyond.

Dairy farms are vital to Vermont Agriculture and with the current milk price situation; dairy farmers are struggling to keep their farm viable while supporting their families as well. If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, from financial planning, ways to cope and deal with stress, or simply need someone to talk with about your situation, call the **Farmer's Hotline**.

1-800-545-8920 Speak with Audrey or Melissa



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******Notice to all Farm Program Participants******

Beginning **August 3, 2009**, *all payments* made by direct deposit to FSA farm program participants will take a one day detour thru the Department of Treasury. This will allow FSA to become compliant with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. Any participant receiving payment who has delinquent Federal debt will have the payment withheld to help satisfy that debt. All payments not withheld will be credited to the participant's account the following day. This process should have minimal affect on the availability of earned funds for most of our customers.

Livestock Mortality Composting Workshops

presented by the

Highfields
center for
Composting

Composting is the preferred method of managing carcasses in Vermont due to extremely limited rendering options and concerns about groundwater via burial. Composting can be 100% successful **IF** you follow the proper procedures. This short class will cover everything you need to know about site set-up, carcass preparation, and pile construction and management. Join us!

Date: September 17, 2009

Time: 10:00am – 1:00 pm

Location: Highfields Center for Composting, West Hill Road, Hardwick

Directions: From Hardwick, N on Rte 14, left on West Hill Road, 2.3 miles on right

Date: September 24, 2009

Time: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Location: Nelson's Crystal Brook Farm, Rte 5, Derby Line

Directions: From intersection of Rte 5 and 105 in Derby Center, 2.5 miles N, on right

Fee: \$10 (\$20 for non-farmers) includes DVD, handouts and refreshments. Call to register: 802-472-5138 x203 or email june@highfieldsinstitute.org

These workshops are generously supported by the John Merck Fund along with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Vermont Agency of Agriculture - Foods & Markets, and Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD).