



March 2010

# Chittenden/Washington County FSA News

## Chittenden/Washington County USDA Service Center

### Chittenden/Washington County FSA

802-865-7895 x4 phone  
802-865-7947 fax  
800-910-2035 x4 (VT only)  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/VT](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/VT)

### Hours

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

### County Committee

Richard Parizo LAA-1  
Daniel Pillsbury LAA-2  
Sumner Farr, Jr LAA-3  
Catherine Scribner LAA-4  
Morgan Churchill LAA-5

### Upcoming County Committee Meeting Dates

April 14, 2010  
May 12, 2010

### Staff

Lawrence Parker x102  
Eileen Powers x106  
Pearl Wells x100  
Bradford Parker x103

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

Caroline Alves x203  
Tate Jeffrey x119  
Michel Lapointe x118  
Danny Peet x202  
Norman Smith x117

### Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District

Ashley Lidman x104



## DCP Signup Continues

Signup for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program continues until June 1, 2010. 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 2010, 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 statutorily set below its target price.

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. To access this online 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.

## SURE

Currently applications for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) are being taken for the 2008 Crop Year. SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that were incurred starting in the crop year 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops of economic

significance in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

- at least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition
- crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm
- the farm experiencing the loss must be in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties. Those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are also eligible to receive SURE payments for production losses or crop quality losses.

Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

A SURE calculator is available at: [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sure\\_calculator\\_2008.xls](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sure_calculator_2008.xls). The calculator is not official, but is intended for educational use. A fact sheet and background information is also available online.

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## ACRE

The ACRE Program 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. The June 1, 2010, signup deadline is mandatory for all participants. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

A 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 average 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% (85% in 2012) of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the state ACRE guarantee and the state 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. Participants in ACRE will forgo counter-cyclical payments. Also a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20% and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30%.

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 for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

## Farmer Input Wanted for the Winooski Basin Plan

A management plan is underway for the Winooski River basin to improve and protect water quality and associated resources. Agricultural resources are important to the basin, and producers are invited to share their concerns and ideas for improvements at a series of focus groups to be held in March and April. Please come to offer your perspectives as to what is working and not working with farm programs and cost-share opportunities, especially in these tough economic times.

**Livestock Farmers, Wednesday, April 7, 10-11:30**, UVM Extension Conference Room, 617 Comstock Rd, Berlin. Refreshments will be served. Other focus groups will be offered and announced as they are organized.

RSVP one week ahead of the meeting to [linda.henzel23@gmail.com](mailto:linda.henzel23@gmail.com) or 802-225-6059.

Comments will be received for the next few months, so please send them to Linda if you cannot attend. The mailing address is: PO Box 515, Waterbury, VT 05676.

## Actively Engaged

USDA has amended the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members can not exceed \$40,000.

## Farm First – Vermont's Dairy Producer Assistance Program

The Farm First Program provides short-term counseling for any problem or concern faced by VT dairy producers and household members including: legal and financial issues, depression, medical, relationship, disability, stress, childcare and conflict resolution. The program also offers resource and/or referral information on any issue. Farm First is confidential and FREE. **The dairy producer access number to call is 1-877-493-6216** (toll free).

This program is sponsored by the VT Agency of Agriculture, UVM Extension, Vermont Farm Health Task Force and a consortium of businesses and non-profit organizations concerned about the well-being of Vermont dairy producers and their families.

For a complete list of sponsors visit:  
[www.vermontagriculture.com](http://www.vermontagriculture.com)

## Honey Loans

Honey loans are a type of marketing assistance loan, and they are available until March 31, 2010. The national loan rate for honey is \$0.60 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate, so LDPs are not available at this time.

To be eligible for a loan, the producer must have produced honey in the United States during the calendar year for which the loan is requested: extracted the honey on or before Dec. 31 of the applicable crop year; have continuous beneficial interest in the honey through date of repayment of the loan; and been responsible for the financial risk of keeping. Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm-stored honey during the term of the loan.

The containers must be marked with the producer's name, type of honey, number of container and net weight. Pre-loan inspections are required before the loans can be disbursed.

Honey used as collateral may not be disposed of without approval of the county office staff.

## Renting Land to New American Farmers

Recent immigrants are the fastest growing group of organic vegetable farmers in the United States. In Vermont, the majority of the refugee immigrant population is concentrated in Chittenden and Washington Counties, primarily in the Burlington and Winooski area. New Farms for New Americans (NFNA) is a program which supports these New American farmers with training, technical assistance and a farm incubator experience. NFNA is run by a private non-profit, the Association of Africans Living in Vermont. The program's mission is to provide assistance not only to Africans, but to all immigrants who are aspiring to become farmers in the United States. NFNA farmers are mostly from Somalia, the Congo, Burundi, Bhutan, Burma, Russia and Iraq. They have a wealth of agricultural knowledge that they would like to put into practice in the United States.

Some of the farmers that NFNA serves are ready to become independent of the incubator farm and rent their own land. These farmers would run their own business, while continuing to receive technical assistance from NFNA.

Ideally, this farm land would be located relatively close to their homes, leaving landowners in Chittenden and Washington Counties in the best position to help. In most cases 1 or 2 acres of tillable land would be sufficient.

If you would be interested in renting land to a New American farmer, through the NFNA program, please contact Josie Weldon, or anyone at the Association of Africans Living in Vermont. The contact information is:

Association of Africans Living in Vermont Inc.

72 North Champlain St.

Burlington, VT 05401

Office: (802) 985-3106

Cell: (802) 343-7007 (Josie)

[josieweldon.aalv@yahoo.com](mailto:josieweldon.aalv@yahoo.com)

[www.africansinvermont.org](http://www.africansinvermont.org)

## Farm to Plate Strategic Plan

The Farm to Plate Initiative is preparing a 10 year strategic plan for Vermont's farm and food sector, and *your input is needed at this critical stage in the process*. Farm to Plate staff are partnering with many interested people and organizations to host a day of food system education, planning and networking.

Join us at the summit to:

- Hear from national expert Ken Meter about how local food planning from around the country and how the Vermont plan may be a model for others to follow
- Hear about our preliminary findings from the Farm to Plate research, regional summits, focus groups and other stakeholder meetings
- Connect with other Vermonters committed to improving the local food system, and
- Review and comment on DRAFT Farm to Plate Strategic Plan goals and objectives for the future of Vermont's farm and food sector.

We'd like to have a broad representation from all areas in the food system.

For more information contact, to register, or volunteer at the Summit, email: Heather Pipino [heather@vsjf.org](mailto:heather@vsjf.org). For more information about the Farm to Plate Initiative, see <http://www.vsjf.org/project-details/5/farm-to-plate-initiative>.

Chittenden/Washington County  
 FSA Office  
 1193 S Brownell Rd STE 35  
 Williston, VT 05495  
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### CREP, SAFE & Continuous CRP Available

Environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Conservation Reserve Program State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Practice, and Continuous CRP are eligible for enrollment. These targeted programs remain funded, and continue to provide a heightened environmental benefit on select areas.

Selected Interest Rates for March 2010		Dates to Remember	
90-Day Treasury Bill	1.25%		
Farm Operating - Direct	3.00%	March 31	Honey Loans Close
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.125%	April 14	COC meeting – 10 a. m.
Limited Resource	5.00%	May 12	COC meeting – 10 a.m.
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%	June 1	2010 DCP/ACRE Enrollment Ends
		<b>June 15</b>	<b>IRS Consent Forms need to be Filed</b>
Emergency	3.75%	June 30	Crop Reports for Small Grains Due
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year	3.125%	July 15	Crop Acreage Reports Due
Farm Storage Facility – 10 year	3.625%		
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year	4.00	July 15	<b>2009</b> Production Reports Due for NAP
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.375%		

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."