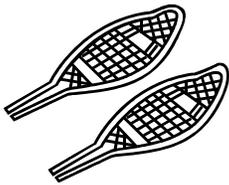


January 2008

# Lamoille County News



Lamoille County  
USDA Service Center



**Lamoille County FSA**  
109 Professional Dr. Ste.2  
Morrisville, VT 05661  
802-888-4935  
www.fsa.usda.gov  
**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**  
Steven Jones, Chair  
Fred Boyden, Co-Chair  
Christine Kaiser, reg. member  
COC meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday  
of each month

**Staff**  
**County Executive Director**  
John St.Onge (ext. 11)  
John.stonge@vt.usda.gov

**Program Staff**  
Heather Mateja (ext.10)  
Heather.mateja@vt.usda.gov

## County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Fred Boyden! Fred was re-elected to represent farmers from Cambridge, Johnson, Belvidere, and Waterville on the county committee. Fred was elected to his 2nd consecutive term. The election results for Local Administrative Area 1 are:

Fred Boyden — Elected to the county committee (COC),

Joe Tisbert — 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

## LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM



This program is designed to provide assistance to producers who suffered feed losses as a direct result of an eligible disaster event. The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Eligible disaster event in Vermont: excessive moisture/severe storms during the 2006 crop season.
- Eligible feed losses: pasture losses, of quantity or quality, and/or extra feed cost due to losses of feed normally produced.
- Eligible livestock: Located in Vermont on May 1, 2006 and maintained for commercial use as part of farming operation.
- Other eligible criteria required to participate in FSA programs are applicable.

Sign up started 9/10/07 and continues until further notice.

## Dairy Disaster Aid Program:

DDAP will help dairy producers recover production losses resulting from a variety of adverse weather conditions in the last few years. The program provides \$16 million in benefits to dairy producers for production losses that occurred between Jan. 1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007, because of qualifying natural disasters. It compensates producers for production losses when a farm's herd average falls below the Vermont NASS average for the Breed.

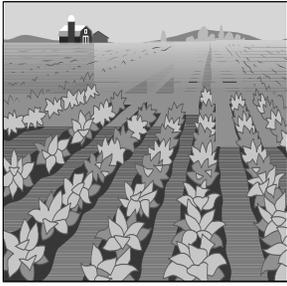


## Power of Attorney

If you're too busy getting work done around the farm to come into your local FSA office to conduct business and complete your paperwork, here's a solution. Retain an agent to act on your behalf for programs and transactions authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill and most other FSA administered programs. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Forms obtained and completed outside USDA Service Center offices must be notarized. To find out more, call the office.

## 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.



## Did You Know:

It used to take a person 1 hour to milk 6 cows by hand. Today, a person can milk 100 cows in an hour with modern machines.



Cows have an acute sense of smell - they can smell something up to 6 miles away!



People started raising sheep over ten thousand years ago.

President Woodrow Wilson grazed sheep on the White House lawn. The wool from the sheep was sold to raise money for the Red Cross during World War I. The flock included "Old Ike," a tobacco chewing ram.

One pound of wool can make ten miles of yarn.

## 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.

## 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 or Officer for more details and assistance in applying.

## 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 or officer for more details and assistance in applying.

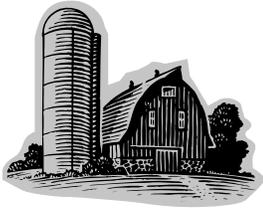
## Youth Loans

Remember FSA makes operating loans to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing 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

## Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to gather financial records and start thinking about filling out a 1040. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement. The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information.



## ***Faxed Signatures***

Certain FSA program applications may be accepted by facsimile (fax) machine if Form FSA-237, Facsimile Signature Authorization and Verification, is on file. This authorization form should be completed, signed and witnessed by the FSA office staff, or notarized.

## ***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 FSA office directly or by phone.

## ***Complaint 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 four choices – an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation, appeal to State Committee and appeal to the USDA National Appeal Division (NAD).

## ***Civil Rights Complaint Process***

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

## ***Payment Limitation/Eligibility***

USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law. Documents and forms to determine eligibility and limitations once completed are reviewed on an annual basis. It is the producer's responsibility to report changes in the farming operation which may affect payment eligibility and payment limitations. The following payment limitations apply to DCP for each contract year under the

current Farm Bill: For all covered commodities, except peanuts: \$40,000 for direct payments and \$65,000 for counter-cyclical payments. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program has a \$450,000 payment limitation total for fiscal years 2002 – 2007. The Conservation Reserve Program's annual limit is \$50,000 per person. Additional payment limitations apply to other programs. Entities such as corporations, limited partnerships, trusts and estates are required to provide names, addresses, and ID numbers of their members.

## ***Attention Producers, Landowners***

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

- Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
- Are there any areas on your farm(s) that you are considering cropping that have not been cropped in recent years?
- Is there a wet spot in a field that 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 Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they may remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any question 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.

## ***Buy Local / Buy Vermont The 10% Difference***

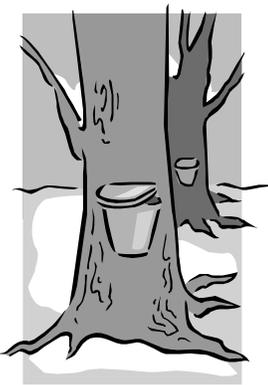
When the economy slumps and money gets tight, people put off purchases for new items like furniture, cars, electronics and vacations. No matter how tough things get however, people still have to eat. That's where "the 10% difference" comes into play. If Vermonters shifted just 10% of their food purchases to locally grown food products that would add more than \$100 million to Vermont's economy.

Maple Syrup has the same calcium content as whole milk.

When done properly, tapping does no permanent damage to the tree. Some maple trees have been tapped for over a hundred years!

Each tap will yield an average of 10 gallons of sap per season, producing about one quart of maple syrup. Or, to put it another way, it takes 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup.

Vermont produces more maple syrup than any other state.



<b>Selected Interest Rates for January 2008</b>	
Farm Operating - Direct	4.375%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.0%
Emergency	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility	3.625%

<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
Jan 21	Office Closed – Martin Luther King Day
Feb 18	Office Closed – George Washington’s Birthday

Visit our Web site at  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

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