



December 2008

Orleans County News

Farm Service Agency
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Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee
Scott Birch, Chair
Brad Maxwell, Vice Chair
Doug Lawson, Voting Member
Donna Hammond, Minority Advisor

COC meets 2nd Wednesday of each month.

NRCS District
Stephanie Sever, Dist Mgr X18
Dee Nault
Paul Daniels, Chair
Bill Lawson, Vice Chair
Richard Delfavero, Treasurer
Burton Strong
William Ryan
Darryl Mongeon

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Dorcas McAllister, FLO X15
Cheryl Smith, PT X13
Angela Goodridge, PT X12
Meghan DuBois, FLOT X17

Program Staff
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Laurie Locke, PT X16
Brock Columbia, PT X26



Happy Holidays
from the entire
staff at the USDA
Service Center.

COC Elections

Congratulations to Donna Hammond on her election to the County Committee. Donna has been a valued participant over the past several years as the Minority Advisor to the Committee. Her guidance and contributions have been greatly appreciated over the years and will remain to be valued as she becomes a voting member of the Committee.

A big thanks go to Brad Maxwell for his many years of service. We will miss his input and guidance as we continue to serve the farmers in Orleans county. The County Committee for the upcoming year consists of Scott Birch, Doug Lawson and Donna Hammond. At our January meeting they will vote to elect the chairperson and vice-chairperson for 2009.

Going Green

In an effort to control administrative costs of printing and postage, we are hoping readers accept our invitation to "Go Green" by receiving these newsletters and other electronic messages by email. If you'd like to be more environmentally responsible and receive this by email, please contact our office to provide us with your email address.

Pork Referendum

FSA will be assisting Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) as they conduct a "Request for Referendum". Participation is voluntary and only "producers and importers who were engaged in pork production or in the importation of hogs, pigs, pork, or pork products between Jan 1, 2007 and Dec 31, 2007 and were at least 18 years of age on or before Dec 31, 2007 are eligible to participate."

Forms are available from any FSA office or online at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMarketingPrograms> In order to vote, Form LS-54-1 and supporting documentation, where applicable, such as a sales receipt, vet bill, feed bill, copies of grower contracts, cancelled check or proof of payment must be returned in person, by mail, or by facsimile to the appropriate county FSA office by close of business Jan 2, 2009. Returns by mail must be postmarked no later than midnight on Jan 2, 2009 and received by Jan 9, 2009.



UVM Extension Information/Link

At the link below you will find information from UVM Extension on numerous issues that are of importance to you and your operation. The Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center offers a monthly newsletter to keep you informed on the webcast series, new additions to content, and innovative manure management resources and programs from across the country. http://www.extension.org/pages/Livestock_and_Poultry_Environmental_Learning_Center_Newsletter

Report of Producer Payments

A summary of all earned payments and/or refunds during the previous calendar year, will be mailed to producers during the last week of January. Form CCC 1099-G will be mailed from our Kansas City office.

MILC Sign Up Underway

Signup for the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC) is underway and will continue through the program's expiration date, Sept. 30, 2012. Under the new regulations for the Program, the per-operation limit is modified for the period from October, 2008 through August, 2012 from a maximum of 2.4 million pounds of milk to a maximum of 2.985 million pounds of milk per fiscal year. In addition, a "feed cost adjuster" will be included in the calculation of the monthly MILC payment rate. It will adjust the \$16.94 per hundredweight benchmark price upward depending on the cost of feed rations as determined by NASS in the National Average Dairy Feed Ration Cost. MILC payments will be authorized on a monthly basis when the adjusted target price exceeds the Boston Class I price for that month.

The 2008 Farm Bill made changes to the provisions for payment eligibility to add an adjusted gross income (AGI) limit. If the individual or entity has average annual non-farm AGI for the three previous years greater than \$500,000, the individual or entity is not eligible for MILC benefits. This requirement is in addition to the requirement that a participant be in compliance with highly erodible and wetland regulations. Producers will also be expected to file paperwork to define their farming operations. During the signup period, participating dairy operations must select the month of the fiscal year to start receiving payments for eligible production. Producers applying during the "initial signup phase", which ends January 21, 2009, will be able to select any preceding month, the current month, or any future month as their start month. Producers submitting contract applications after Jan. 21, 2009, will not have the option of selecting a preceding month and will be limited by "old" start month selection rules. For more information on the MILC program, contact your local USDA Service Center.

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 an FSA-211 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.

Bank Account Changes?

All FSA payments are supposed to be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program 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.

Online Services

Producers, if you have Internet access you can electronically log on, fill out and print a variety of FSA paper forms in the comfort of your home as your schedule allows. You can also register for secure electronic access that will allow you to electronically sign and transmit some forms directly to the county office staff. If you are new to the website, first you will want to obtain a Level 2 USDA Service Center Customer ID and password at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and then click on "Create an Account Page" link.

USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. This includes items such as submitting forms electronically, completing surveys online, and checking the status of your USDA accounts.

If you already have a Customer ID and password, then click on the following eForms website at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet> and then click on the "Sign In" button. A disclaimer window will open and after you read the "Warning message" click on the "Continue" button.

Then the USDA Web services page will open to the eAuthentication login page. Enter your login User ID and password and then click on the "Login" button. To sign and transmit forms electronically, you must sign-up and get a User ID and password. Submitting an e-Form is convenient. You can access information anytime day or night seven days a week. It's faster and forms and applications can be submitted and received in the county office in a matter of minutes, not days or weeks.

DCP Sign Up Underway

Sign-up has started for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program for farms with base acres. You can sign up online or at local USDA service centers. Sign up 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. 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 can 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.

USDA Enacts Changes to Payment Limitations, Income Qualifications, and Implementations 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 these 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 non-farm 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 within 30 days of the date of publication.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.