



Rutland/Bennington County News

Welcome Robert Paquin – New VT FSA State Executive Director

The Obama Administration named Robert Paquin to serve as the State Executive Director (SED) for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Vermont. Bob 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.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program Changes

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the

FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities

For more information about FSFL please call or visit the FSA county office or see website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

NAP Fees Are Due November 20

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.

The application deadline date for the 2010 coverage on mixed forage crops is November 20, 2009. In order to be eligible for disaster assistance programs, including Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), producers are required to timely purchase, at a minimum, CAT coverage for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for all non-insurable crops on their entire farm.

NAP coverage for 2010 costs \$250 per crop, but not more than \$750 per producer per county, or not more than \$2250 total per producer for all counties.

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. A new CCC-471, "Application For Coverage" is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage of the same crop or crops, but **FSA requires a CCC-926, Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) form for 2010.**

Rutland/Bennington County FSA

170 S Main St STE 4
Rutland, VT 05701-4559
802-775-8034
800-300-6927 (VT)
802-773-4177 (FAX)
802-253-0191 (TDD)

Hours

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

County Committee

Richard P Browe, Chair
Karl Strohmaier, Vice Chair
Clifton Cressy
Richard Sheldon
David Seward

Minority Advisor

Cristine Carabeau

Staff

Diane Heleba, PT X 10
Marge Christy, PT X 12
Michelle Smith, SCEP X 13

Co. Executive Director

Phyllis L Torrey X 11

Farm Loan Staff

802-388-6748 (Middlebury)
1-888-408-3783 (Loans)

Farm Loan Manager

Gary Braman

Loan Officers

David Girard
Jill Cioffi-Thomas

*Farm Loan Staff is in the
Rutland Service Center
Wednesdays – Ext 22*

NRCS Staff

William Forbes, DC X 14
Steve Pytlík X 18
Sally Eugair X 16
Les Wright X 23
Corinne Matarese X 21

Rutland NRCD Staff

Nanci McGuire X 17

Poultney-Mettowee NRCD

Marli Rupe 287-8339

Bennington NRCD

Shelly Stiles 442-2275

Supplemental Disaster Assistance Programs

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Trade Act of 1974 to create five new disaster programs, collectively referred to as Supplemental Agriculture Disaster County Assistance programs. These programs include:

- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

To be eligible for these programs, producers must purchase at least catastrophic risk protection (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for non-insurable crops under SURE, TAP, and ELAP.

Producers who meet the definition of a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource Producer, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher, do not have to meet this risk management purchase requirement.

Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP)

ELAP provides compensation to eligible producers of livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, adverse weather, or flooding, including losses due to blizzards and wildfires. ELAP is for losses that are not covered by Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), or Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE).

Eligible producers under ELAP may receive assistance for losses that occur on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011, during the calendar year in which the loss occurs. Eligible losses include feed losses, physical losses and additional costs incurred in providing feed to eligible livestock.

There are two parts to the ELAP application process:

1. A notice of loss
2. Application for payment

An application for payment cannot be filed without a notice of loss.

Signup, for producers with eligible losses during 2008 and 2009, began September 14, 2009. Producers who suffered losses in calendar year 2008 must provide a notice of loss and application for payment in their administrative county office no later than **December 14, 2009**.

There are no late filed provisions for ELAP. Producers with eligible losses must timely file an acreage report on grazing land acres, honey bee colonies and farm-raised fish pond acres.

Eligible physical losses of honey bees and honey bee hives, lost due to adverse weather or loss conditions are eligible under ELAP. Producers will be required to provide documentation of beginning and ending inventory of honey bee colonies when claiming a physical loss of honey bees or honey bee hives. Physical losses will be compensated at 60 percent of the actual replacement cost of the honey bees or honey bee hives.

Additional ELAP information is available at FSA county offices or on line at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Changing Banks

Almost all FSA 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. 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.

Empowering Beginning Women Farmers through Whole Farm Planning

Holistic Management International has been funded through the USDA's Beginning Farmer Grant to teach beginning women farmers the tools of whole farm planning. Groups are forming in New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New York.

Classes will begin in January 2010. Participants must agree to attend the 6 sessions that will take place over the winter of 2010 and 4 farm tours that will take place during the spring and fall of 2010. Sessions will be scheduled when the participants are selected but will likely be held on Saturday. There will be farm mentors also available.

If you are a woman farmer who has been farming less than 10 years, contact Mary Peabody, UVM Extension/VT WAgN, 802/223-2389 for an application. If you would like to participate as a farmer mentor, please also contact Mary Peabody.

Applications must be submitted by **November 25, 2009**. Class is limited to 15 participants.

Biomass Crop Assistance Program

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

BCAP (continued)

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.

EMERGENCY LOANS AVAILABLE

A Secretarial Disaster Designation was declared for excessive rain and hail that occurred during the period of May 1, 2009 and continuing in Washington County, NY. Farmers in Rutland and Bennington Counties may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency if they are unable to obtain financing from any other source. These loans carry an interest rate of 3.75 percent.

Production Losses: Eligible farmers may also use emergency loan funds to recover a portion of losses on growing crops that were destroyed.

Physical Losses: Eligible farmers may use emergency loan funds to repair or rebuild essential farm buildings, clean debris or prepare land for replanting, and/or to replace livestock, supplies and harvested crops on hand or in storage that were lost.

In addition to FSA emergency loans this assistance includes the **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program**, which was approved as part of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Loan applications will be accepted at the Middlebury FSA office through October 31, 2010. Call 802-388-6748 or

1-888-408-3783 for more information.

Farm Loan Year End Reviews

Producers that have a farm loan with FSA are reminded they must provide data for their Year-End Analysis (YEA) to their loan officer each year. Borrowers are urged to provide this information timely so that their files can be maintained. The office will contact you for the data you will need to provide us.

Applications for FSA Farm Loan Assistance

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 a Middlebury Farm Loan Officer for more details and assistance in applying at 1-888-408-3783.

Election Voting Begins

Nominations are complete and the next step in the county committee election process for Rutland/Bennington Local Administrative Area #1 is the mailing out of the ballots, which began November 6. **Voters have until December 7 to return their ballots to the county office. Envelope containing ballot must be signed to be eligible.**

Prospective Voter Requirements If you're on the mailing list for this newsletter, the chances are you are an eligible voter. Anyone who meets the requirements in 1 or 2, plus 3, below, is eligible to vote:

1. Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as either of the following:
 - an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper, or
 - a partner in a general partnership or member of a joint venture that has an interest in a farm as an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper; or
2. Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm; and
3. Eligible to participate in any FSA program that is provided by law, regardless of the status of funding.

Candidates on the ballot for this year are:

Jacalyn "Jacki" Ambrozaitis, Benson
Martha Hayward, Castleton
Jeff Noble, Benson
Richard "Dick" Sheldon, Fair Haven

Discrimination Prohibited No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| November 11 | Veterans' Day Holiday |
| November 20 | NAP – Mixed Forage Crops Fees Due |
| November 25 | Apply to VT WAgN Course |
| November 26 | Thanksgiving Day Holiday |
| December 7 | COC Ballots due |
| December 14 | ELAP Signup Ends |
| December 31 | NAP fees due – Maple sap and Honey |
| Ongoing | Conservation Reserve Program/ CREP |
| | Farm Storage Facility Loan |
| | Milk Income Loss Contract |

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

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

Dairy Producers Need 2010 AGI

All producers participating in the MILC program must complete a 2010 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) form. Although MILC contracts are multi-year contracts, new Farm Bill regulations stipulate that producers now must annually certify to the AGI requirements.

MILC payments calculated on your October 2009 production, the first month of the 2010 fiscal year, will be issued in December 2009. A new AGI certification must be on file before an October MILC payment can be issued.

The office will be sending you the AGI form(s) soon. **Please complete and return to the county office by November 25.**

TIMELY FEED ANALYSIS!!!!

Farmers are reminded to be sure to get their corn and hay sampled and tested before **December 31, 2009**. Otherwise, they may be penalized under future disaster programs.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,112,000. Present interest rate for Operating Loans is 2.875% typically for 7 years. Farm Ownership rate is 4.75% and for maximum 40-year-term. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA.

For details contact Middlebury loan office for an appointment with a farm loan officer at 1-888-408-3783



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