



January 30, 2008

Windham County News

Windham County USDA Service Center

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Hours

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

County Committee

Jill Adams Mancivalano-Chair
Charles Robb Jr. -Vice
Arnold Fisher-Member

County Committee meets
2nd Tuesday of the Month

Staff

County Executive Director
Julie Jacque (x107)
Julie.Jacque@vt.usda.gov

Program Technician
Valerie Brassor (x100)
Valerie.brassor@usda.gov

Farm Loan Staff

George Button, Jr. FLM
802-295-7942 x15
800-789-6713

NRCS Staff

Lance Gorham x101
Lance.gorham@vt.usda.gov

NRCS District

Jolene Hamilton, Mgr.x104
Sylvia Harris x105

Julie's Notes

Happy New Year! Hope those of you getting ready for sugaring are staying warm and enjoying the calm before the storm.

Just a few comments on what has been happening in the office:

* We are currently under a continuation of the previous Farm Bill until March 15. We hear bits and pieces about the negotiations and hear "they" hope to come to agreement and signature sometime between March and June. Remember: you are the voices that can help shape a 5 year policy. If you don't like what you are hearing about policy that affects YOU contact your local legislator and tell them what you think.

* We have been coordinating with NRCS, Lance Gorham, in meeting and signing up county producers for EQIP. Thanks to Lances' effort and changes to EQIP money pools recognizing non-livestock operations, we were able to put Windham County on the map! NRCS has double-digit approvals for applicants! With a significant number of applications and approvals, the county could potentially receive 41% of the non-livestock funds. Well done!

*Another service to any and all fruit and vegetable growers is the NAP program. Deadline to sign up is MARCH 15 to enroll for ANNUAL crop coverage. There is a \$100 enrollment fee with a maximum fee of \$300 per county. If you are a commercial grower in any way, shape or form, the fee is the same for all and encompasses just about any annual crop you can think of growing. I believe in the benefits of this program. Call me for some examples of success or for any questions you may have.

* VT State AAP talk about buffering crop fields that border bodies of water-streams, brooks, rivers, perennial streams. CREP, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, will compensate you with an incentive payment upfront, cost share additional needs (fence, water sources if pasture land, etc.) up to 100%, and an annual rental for that buffer. Would you like to see what your payment could be to follow regulation? Give us a call.

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Jill Adams Mancivalano of Wilmington! Jill has been re-elected to represent farmers from the towns of Dover, Jamaica, Londonderry, Newfane, Stratton, Wardsboro, West Halifax, Whitingham, Wilmington and Windham on the Windham County Committee.

The election results for this LAA #3 are:

Jill Adams Mancivalano: Elected member to COC,
William Stuart, Jacksonville: 1st Alternate to COC,
Nelson Coleman, S. Londonderry: 2nd Alt. to COC.

We here at FSA appreciate all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

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 be 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 you to assure that you 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 start.



UVM Lab Testing-No More

UVM Lab is no longer accepting samples themselves. They are sending ALL soil and manure samples on to the University of Maine Extension for analysis. The analysis is then returned to UVM for interpreting results and recommendations for Vermont needs.

All other samples (compost, forage, plant, water) are not accepted at all.

If you have internet access, here is a link to other accepted labs for these samples:

http://pss.uvm.edu/ag_testing/

Call the office for the information or a list to be mailed to you.

Need Equipment? Start-Up or Operating Funds? Loans for Beginning Farmers

FSA has funding to assist beginning farmers 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 than 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.

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 office each year. Borrowers are urged to provide this information timely so their files can be maintained. The office will contact you for the data you will need to assist us.

Wool/Mohair/Unshorn Pelt LDPs

For Crop year 2007- January 31, 2008 is the final deadline to apply for a 2007 crop wool/mohair/unshorn pelt Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) **You must apply and provide documentation by this date!**

LDP rates are announced every Wednesday. The current ungraded wool LDP price is 15 cents per pound. And the mohair LDP price is 57 cents per pound. The payment for unshorn pelts is calculated as follows $6.865 \text{ lbs} \times \text{ungraded wool rate} = \text{price paid per pelt}$.

For crop year 2008- There is a form that producers need to sign once per crop year, indicating their intention to apply for a Loan Deficiency Payment. This form must be signed and submitted prior to losing beneficial interest in the crop. **This program is only authorized through March 15, 2008.** Please contact the office for more details.



Renewable Energy- The Buzz

Vermont agricultural producers and rural businesses interested in learning more about the opportunity to reduce energy consumption, cut costs, and/or produce renewable energy should contact USDA Rural Development in Montpelier, VT at 802-828-6031, or visit the website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt>.

A recent beneficiary of this program is our own Windham County, Scott Farm, Inc. in Dummerston. They received a \$15,056 renewable energy grant and a \$15,057 loan guarantee to install a Garn WHS2000 wood boiler and a 3.6kW solar PV system to energize an historic apple packing facility. The systems will provide 100% of the thermal and electricity needed for the apple packing facility, previously without energy, and will generate a total 701.9 million BTUs annually. Total project costs of \$60,226 with \$6,130 energy savings if buying electricity and oil instead, equate to a 10 year simple payback.



Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to gather financial records and starting 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.

Foreign Investors Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

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.usdda.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.

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

Program Appeals Process

After a program 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

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.



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MAPLE FACTS:

***Maple Syrup has the same calcium content as whole milk.**

***Maple Syrup even contains trace amounts amino acids - the building blocks of protein!**

***Only a few places in the world have the right climate for sugar maples: New England, upstate New York, Michigan, the Maritime provinces, and southern Quebec and Ontario.**

Dates to Remember	
Jan. 31	Last Day to request Wool LDP for 2007 crop
Jan.29-31	VT Farm Show Barre, VT
Feb 16-17 8am to 5pm	26 th Annual NOFA-VT Winter Conference @ Vt.Technical College, Randolph Vt.
Feb. 25	VT Vegetable & Berry Growers Assoc. Annual Meeting Capital Plaza Hotel , 100 State St. Montpelier Vt.
March 20 8:30-5pm.	Workshop Management of Plant – Parasitic Nematodes of Vegetables & Small Fruit No Fee Register by March 15. Lake Morey Resort, 1 Club house Rd. Fairlee, Vt Contact Beth Gugino@ 315-787-2412.
March 15	NAP Deadline for Annual Crops; FSA Office

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