

September 5, 2008



Windham County FSA Newsletter

**Windham County
USDA Service Center**
28 Vernon St., Ste. 331
Brattleboro Vt. 05301
802 254-9766 phone
802 254 3307 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov
Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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

County Committee meets
2nd Tuesday of the Month

Staff
County Executive Director
Julie Jacque (x107)
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Program Technician
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Farm Loan Staff
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**George is in Windham
Co. Every 2nd & 4th Tues-
day of the month or by
appointment**

NRCS Staff
Lance Gorham x101
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IMPORTANT: Crop "Buy-in" for 2008 & Future Disaster Programs in- cluding livestock programs

Colchester, VT, Aug. 15, 2008 – Harvey Smith, State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Vermont, reminds Vermont crop producers that the deadline to obtain "buy-in" coverage under FSA's future Disaster Assistance Programs created by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) is **September 16, 2008**.

"The 2008 Farm Bill created new disaster programs which require that producers have crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for noninsurable crops for all farms in all counties in which they have an interest," said SED Smith. In Vermont, this would include all commercial production of corn, hay, soybeans, maple, fruits, vegetables, tree fruits, etc. Crops produced for livestock feed are considered commercial crops, therefore pastureland grazed by livestock would be included in that requirement. Deadlines for obtaining crop insurance and/or NAP coverage have passed for 2008 crops. However, the Farm Bill provided that producers would be allowed to sign a waiver request and pay a "buy-in" fee to be eligible for the future disaster programs. This fee does not get them actual crop insurance or NAP coverage for 2008, but will allow them to be eligible for the new disaster programs.

With Vermont farmers being affected by disastrous weather this summer and potential losses due to that weather, SED Smith stressed that crop producers need to be aware of the requirements. Because the new disaster program regulations have not been written yet, potential benefits from those programs are difficult to determine.

The following questions are provided to assist a producer in making the decision whether to pay the buy-in fee:

1. Do you anticipate having 2008 losses in crop Quantity or Quality?

If you say "no", you do not need to "buy-in". If you say "yes", see next question.

2. Do you have crop insurance and/or NAP for ALL crops you produce commercially?

If you say "yes", you do not need to "buy-in". If

you say "no" or you are not sure, see next question.
3. Do you want to have the option of applying for benefits for 2008 losses under the new disaster programs?

If you say "no", you do not need to "buy-in". If you say "yes", contact your local USDA Service Center to determine what your fee will be.

SED Smith said, **"Those who miss this opportunity will not be eligible for disaster assistance."**

The deadline for paying the buy-in fee is **September 16, 2008**.



NAP Coverage for 2009 Crop Year ****PERIENNIAL CROP DEADLINE****

It is not too early to be thinking about 2009 crop year. 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. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, like **asparagus, blueberries, strawberries, rhubarb, raspberries, MIXED FORAGES, alfalfa**, for which CAT is not available.

Normally, the application deadline date for the 2009 coverage on **PERENNIAL and Fall Seeded crops is NOVEMBER 20**. This date has been extended to December 1, 2008 due to the late signing of the Farm Bill. **In order to be eligible for disaster assistance programs, like 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 2009 costs \$250 per crop, but not more than \$750 per producer per county, or not more than \$1875 total per producer for all counties.



Marketing Assistance Loans

Marketing Assistance loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if you regain beneficial interest. Commodity loan eligibility also requires you comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, report how you use cropland acreage on the farm and ensure that the commodity meets CCC minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

SAFE Conservation Projects

Enrollment in Vermont State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) continues. SAFE is a component of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), tailored to specific watershed areas.

SAFE practices serve to restore wildlife habitat by establishing small blocks of grassland (10-40 acres) and enhancing existing habitats. Certain wildlife species are in decline, and SAFE habitats are designed to help revitalize these populations.

Under CRP, farmers and ranchers enroll eligible land in 10 to 15-year contracts. These plantings help prevent soil and nutrients from running into regional waterways and affecting water quality. The long-term vegetative cover also improves wildlife habitat and soil quality.

In addition to the annual rental payment and cost-share, SAFE may offer participants an up front one-time CRP Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) of \$100 per each SIP-eligible acre and a Practice Incentive Payment when cost share is made.

For more information about potential SAFE projects in your area, contact your local FSA office.

Do you or should you buffer your fields? Consider Continuous CRP and CREP Payments

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll environmentally sensitive acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Continuous CRP program is a voluntary enrollment program. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year. For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments, please contact your local FSA office.

Succession in Interest

If you have made any changes that affect your interest in base acres since you signed your last Direct and Counter-cyclical Program contract, you must report these **successions-in-interest** to the county committee by Sept. 30, so that a final determination can be made on who is program eligible on the property. Changes that qualify as a succession-in-interest include:

- A sale of land
- A change of operator or producer, including an increase or decrease in the number of partners
- A foreclosure, bankruptcy or involuntary loss of the farm.
- A change in producer shares to reflect changes in the producer's share of the crop(s) that were originally approved on the contract.

If a succession-in-interest has taken place, you, as the “predecessor,” are required to refund any advance DCP payments you received for the affected base acres before a payment can be made to the “successor.”

Not reporting a succession-in-interest can result in contract termination and a loss of program benefits for all producers involved.



County Committee Elections



A slate of nominees for your county committee election has been established. The next step in the election process is the mailing of the ballots, which will begin on November 3, 2008. Voters have until December 1, 2008, to return their properly completed ballots to the county office. Elected committee members and alternates take office on Jan. 1, 2008.

Prospective Voter Requirements - Anyone who meets the requirements in either, 1 or 2, as well as item number 3, is eligible to vote for county committee members.

1. Voter is of legal voting age and participates or cooperates in any FSA program, or
2. The voter is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm.
3. The voter must also be eligible to participate in any FSA program provided by law, regardless of the status of funding.

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.

If you have any questions about your voter eligibility, please contact your county office staff.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information. If you want a crop loan, a power of attorney form will need to be completed for husband and wife, if both do not come into the office to sign the forms on the day the loan is disbursed

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. The FSA staff can help you with questions you may have about a particular program.

Farm Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

The Farm Service Agency makes direct and guaranteed loans to socially disadvantaged applicants, enabling them to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Funds are reserved each year specifically for these loans, but regular loan funds can also be used.

Direct loans may be made to qualified applicants by FSA for both farm operating and farm ownership purposes. Guaranteed farm loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes, and may be made by any lending institution subject to Federal or state supervision (banks, savings and loans, and units of the Farm Credit System) and guaranteed by FSA. Some state governments also operate farm loan programs that are eligible for FSA guarantees. FSA typically guarantees 90 or 95 percent of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails.

Persons who are primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-size operations may apply. A family-size farm is one that a family can operate and manage itself.

Socially disadvantaged loan applicants do not receive automatic approval. In addition to being members of a socially disadvantaged group, individual applicants under this program must meet all requirements for FSA's regular farm loan program assistance, including:

- Have a satisfactory history of meeting credit obligations.
- Have sufficient education; training, or at least one-year's experience in managing or operating a farm or ranch within the last five years for a direct operating loan, or, for a direct farm ownership loan, have participated in the business operation of a farm or ranch for three out of the last ten years.
- Be a citizen of the United States (or a legal resident alien), including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and certain former Pacific Island Trust Territories;
- Be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms to meet actual needs; and
- Possess legal capacity to incur loan obligations.





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

Selected Interest Rates for September 2008	
Farm Operating - Direct	3.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.125%
Limited Resource - Farm Operating	5.00%
Limited Resource - Farm Ownership	5.00%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility	3.875%

Important Dates to Note	
Sept. 16	Crop insurance disaster level CAT and NAP "Buy-in fee" for 2008 crops due in FSA office
Sept. 30	2008 DCP Sign Up deadline
Oct. 13	Columbus Day – Office Closed
Nov. 20 extended to Dec. 1	NAP and RMA Sales Closing date for PERENNIAL CROPS (Asparagus, Blueberries, Raspberries, Strawberries, Mixed Forage, Alfalfa, Rhubarb, over wintered Spinach, etc.)
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
Jan. 1	NAP deadline for Maple Sap

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.

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 \$949,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA.

For detailed information, just contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.