



# Berkshire County News

## U.S. Department of Agriculture

### Berkshire County Farm Service Agency

78 Center St. Rm. 208  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
Tel: (413) 443-1776  
Fax: (413) 499-4169

#### Hours

Monday - Friday  
8:00 – 4:30 p.m.

### County Committee

James M. Larkin  
Robert Wirtes  
Bruce Andrews  
Martha Kilmer (advisor)

#### Office Staff

Debra Senger  
Aimee Thayer

### Acting County Executive Director

John Devine

### NRCS District Conservationist

Kate Parsons  
(413) 443-1776 ext. 101

#### Loan Office

(413) 585-1000  
Randy Kleiner,  
loan manager ext. 107  
Beverly Rice,  
loan officer ext. 109

## Election Nomination

### Deadline

The county office staff is accepting nominations for candidates to serve on the Berkshire County Farm Service Agency committee. The nomination period closes *Tuesday, Aug. 1 2006.*

**This year's elected representative to the committee will serve the southern Berkshire area including the Egremonts, Great Barrington, Monterey, Sandisfield, New Marlborough, Sheffield and Mt. Washington townships.**

Farmers who serve on county committees help make decisions necessary to administer federal farm programs offered in their communities. County committees make decisions on agricultural issues such as commodity price support loans and payments, conservation programs, disaster payments and employing county executive directors.

If you participate or cooperate in programs administered by FSA and live in the local administrative area conducting an election, you may be nominated for candidacy for a committee.

You can obtain a complete list of eligibility requirements by visiting the county office or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

[/pas/publications/facts/html/coceliq06htm](http://pas/publications/facts/html/coceliq06htm).

You can nominate yourself or others as candidates. Community based organizations representing minorities and women can nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected.

Keep the following important dates in mind during the 2006 county committee election process:

- The nomination period ends August 1.
- Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters by Nov. 3. The last day to return voted ballots to the county office is Dec. 4.
- Newly elected county committee members take office Jan.1, 2007.

## CRP Cover Maintenance

You are required to maintain your Conservation Reserve Program acres according to the conservation plan you agreed to with the Natural Resources Conservation Service technician. You need to make sure you:

- Have adequate approved vegetative cover to control erosion for the contract period
- Control weeds and other types of undesirable vegetation
- Take control measures outside of the primary nesting season.

Please keep in mind mowing for aesthetic purposes is prohibited. That is why it is important to review your conservation plan and talk to NRCS if you think undesirable plant species are invading your CRP land.

## FSA Farm Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements.

If you're having trouble getting commercial credit, check with the county office staff about eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, rates, term and use of proceeds.

If you have Internet access, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/default.htm> to learn more about FSA loans or contact the loan office at (413) 585-1000 for more information. Ask for Beverly Rice at ext. 109. or Randy Kleiner at ext.107

**Acreage  
Reporting  
Extended  
until  
August 1st**

The County Committee has extended the date-line for filing an acreage report without a late-fee until August 1, 2006.

Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required if you want to be eligible for Farm Service Agency programs and to maintain an historical record of your production with the FSA.

If you are farming in Berkshire County and have never filed an acreage report, stop in to see us and we will be pleased to assist.

**Non-insured Disaster  
Assistance Program (NAP)**

Crop losses must be reported to the FSA office using form CCC-576 Notice of Loss within **15 calendar days** after the disaster occurrence or when damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer. **The Notice of Loss IS NOT considered filed until the form is completed, signed and dated by the producer, and returned within 15 days to the FSA office.** Notice of Loss forms can be obtained by calling the FSA office.

**Prevented Planting:**

If a crop cannot be planted due to adverse weather conditions, the producer must file form CCC-576 Notice of Loss "Prevented Planting" within **15 calendar days** after the disaster occurrence and no later than 15 days after the final planting date for the crop. Final planting dates and Notice of Loss forms can be obtained by calling the FSA office. **The Notice of Loss IS NOT considered filed until the form is completed, signed and dated by the producer, and returned within 15 days to the FSA office.**

A certified Crop Loss Adjuster or FSA office staff will physically inspect the prevented planted acreage. **To be eligible for prevented planted benefits, a producer must be prevented from planting more than 35% of the total eligible acreage intended for planting.**

**Even if you are not a NAP participant, we want to know about weather related disasters to your crops. Reporting losses is always a wise idea. Call the office at 413 443-1776 to report losses for non-NAP covered crops.**

**RECORDKEEPING  
FOR  
HAYMAKERS!**

The potential exists for Forage Quality Loss payments available under a future Crop Disaster Program for hay, haylage (including specific cuttings) and corn silage provided we have the following:

1.) A lab test that includes Acid Detergent Fiber (ADF) for corn silage, and for hay or haylage a test with Relative Feed Value (RFV).

2.) The quantity of corn silage, haylage or dry hay associated with the test. **NOTE: THIS QUANTITY DETERMINATION MUST BE DONE BY A THIRD PARTY!** You can not self-certify the amounts. Your feed consultant must provide a signed letter with their calculations, the date, type of crop and other important information. The Farm Service Agency can also do measurement service for you if you pay a small fee if you want your quantity certified.

If you have forage testing done, please contact our office to inform us of who your feed/crop consultant is. They must be on an approved list as well as the lab where the testing is actually done.

These were the requirements for the past 2003/2004 Crop Disaster Program (CDP). In future years, these requirements may not be exactly the same, however, beginning this year I would strongly recommend that any quality testing that is done also have a third party certified quantity to go with it. If this is completed, you will have the best chance of benefiting from future crop disaster programs on hay, haylage, and/or corn silage.

It may be likely that 2006 first cut hay/haylage is not the best quality and the quantity could possibly be below normal as well. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call our office at 413 443-1776 ext. 100

## **Berkshire County Operations Trainee Selected**

*The Massachusetts State FSA State Committee (STC) is pleased to announce that Aimee Thayer has been offered and has accepted the County Operations Trainee COT position effective July 23, 2006.*

*The STC was extremely impressed and pleased with the applicants who put together impressive packages and conducted themselves exceptionally well during their respective interviews. Berkshire County's Operations Committee participated in the review, interview and selection process.*

*Aimee, who has been employed in the Berkshire County Office since 2002, holds a B Sc. degree in Animal Science. She has practical experience in dairy goat husbandry, maple syrup production, swine, poultry and egg production. Aimee is a Supervisor for the Berkshire Conservation District and a member of the Lanesborough Planning Board serving as the town delegate to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission where she participates on the Regional Issues Committee and is the citizen liaison to the Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D Council.*

*Aimee thanks the State and County Committees for this opportunity and looks forward to serving and continuing to address the needs of the farmers of Berkshire County.*

*Aimee also wishes to thank Deb Senger for her support and especially Sonny Williams for all his wisdom and counsel.*

## **Farm Reconstitutions**

In Farm Service Agency terms, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is called for. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by Aug. 1 for farms enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

- Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;
- Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. This method cannot be used to divide allotments or quotas, if the parent farm is located in two or more counties and the allotments and quotas cannot be transferred from one county to another by sale, lease or owner. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;
- Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.
- DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

The final date to request a 2005 reconstitution is Aug. 1, 2005. If 2005 DCP direct payments have already been issued on the farm, the reconstitution will be effective for 2006, unless the payments are refunded.

## **Agents Need Signed Statement**

Private crop insurance company representatives will now be required to produce a signed statement from you, the producer, when requesting map photocopies and acreage reports (FSA-578) from the Farm Service Agency. The statement must specify the crop year and the related documents that you want reproduced for the insurance agent.

Insurance agents will be required to pay \$1.00 per map photocopy and \$ .20 per printed page for acreage documents. County offices are not responsible for mailing copies to private crop insurance company representatives. Loss adjusters can request photocopies of maps and printed documents by submitting forms FSA-426 or FSA-426-A.

## **Beneficial Interest Policy Changes**

The policy on beneficial interest is undergoing some revision. A recent notice by the national office highlighted these changes.

**Open Storage** Producers who deliver to a Commodity Credit Corporation-approved warehouse, and the commodity is placed in open storage for a term of 15 calendar days or more, will lose beneficial interest in the commodity on the 16th calendar day of the physical delivery unless an approved warehouse receipt can be provided to the producer.

**Unapproved Facilities** Producers who deliver commodities to a facility where the commodity is commingled with commodities from other producers are ineligible for a marketing assistance loan or loan deficiency payment, if the facility is not authorized by state or federal law to store such commodities for the benefit of producers. Therefore, delivery of commodities to a location that is not considered a CCC-approved or state or federally licensed facility will result in the loss of beneficial interest in the commodity on the date of physical delivery.

Deliveries of a commodity to entities such as a dairy, feedlot, pit, ethanol plant, wool pool, feed mill, or any other unapproved storage facility, will result in the loss of beneficial interest on the date of delivery, regardless of any other action or agreement between such an entity and the producer.

**Massachusetts  
Department of Ag  
offers  
Agricultural  
Environmental  
Enhancement  
Program (AEEP)**

The purpose of AEEP is to provide support to agricultural operations in Massachusetts for the mitigation and/ or prevention of impacts on natural resources, including water and air that may result from agricultural practices. Farmers selected to participate are reimbursed for the approved costs of materials used to install best management practices which improve water quality, conserve water or reduce greenhouse gas emissions up to \$25,000.

The application for Fiscal Year 2007 is now available. For information contact Gerard Kennedy at 617-626-1773 or [gerard.kennedy@state.ma.us](mailto:gerard.kennedy@state.ma.us).

**Seed and Hybrid Seed Contract Producers.** Commodities produced under a contract in which the title to the seed remains with the entity and the entity provides the seed to the producer, including contracts for the production of hybrid seed and other specialty seeds, are eligible to be pledged as collateral for a MAL and/or LDP. Beneficial interest in the commodity will be considered lost the earlier of the date a payment is received for the commodity or the commodity is delivered to the contract company.

**Purchased Commodity.** A person who purchases or otherwise acquires a commodity from a producer under any circumstances does not have beneficial interest in the commodity regardless if the purchase or acquisition is made before or after the harvest of the commodity. However, CCC will consider a person to have beneficial interest in the commodity if, before harvest, the person has obtained title to the growing commodity and the risk of producing the commodity at the same time title was obtained for the land on which the commodity was growing.

<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
August 1	Final certification date for all crops except small grains.
August 1	Deadline to submit COC nomination forms
August 1	Deadline for Acreage Reporting
August 1	Final date to request farm re-constitution for current fiscal year.
September 1	Deadline for purchasing 2007 NAP coverage on Christmas Trees, Field grown and Greenhouse Floriculture.
September 30	Final date for 2006 DCP contract revisions.
November 20	Deadline for purchasing 2007 NAP coverage for hay, Fruit Trees, Perennial Crops such as blueberries and strawberries.
December 1	Deadline for purchasing 2007 NAP coverage for Honey and Maple Syrup.

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

CRP info: [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp20/index.asp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp20/index.asp)  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm)

Loan info: [www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/default.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/default.htm)

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