



FSA UPDATES

# Addison Agriculture



**Addison County FSA**  
68 Catamount Park  
Middlebury, VT 05753

Phone: (802) 388-6748

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[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

**Hours**

Monday - Friday

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

**County Committee**

Thomas Audet,

Phyllis Bowdish

Curt Estey

COC meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday  
of each month

**County Executive Director**

Craig Miner (EXT15)

[Craig.Miner@vt.usda.gov](mailto:Craig.Miner@vt.usda.gov)

**Program Staff**

Lisa Gaboriault, PT (X11)

Billie Jo Forgues, PT (X10)

**Farm Loan Manager**

Gary Braman, FLM (x18)

[Gary.Braman@vt.usda.gov](mailto:Gary.Braman@vt.usda.gov)

**Farm Loan Staff**

David Girard, FLO (x20)

Jill Thomas, FLO (x17)

Mari Quesnel, PT (x28)

**County Committee**

**Election Results**

Congratulations to Curt Estey who was elected to the Addison County Committee to represent farmers from Bristol, Ferrisburg, Lincoln, Monkton, New Haven, Starksboro, Vergennes & Waltham. Ben Dykema and Ken Sawyer were elected as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> alternates for this district.

**Thanks David Russell**

David has served on the County Committee for nine consecutive years and will be leaving this position as of Dec. 31. If you see David, thank him for his time and dedication in representing his fellow farmers over the years.

**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.

**Annual DCP Enrollment**

The 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) sign-up began October 1, 2006, and continues until June 1, 2007. Farmers are encouraged to sign up for the DCP program online or at the FSA office. The online service is an example of the technological innovation USDA is using to make its programs more accessible.

Following the June 1, 2007, deadline, USDA will accept late applications through Sept. 30, 2007, with a \$100 late fee. While DCP participants must sign DCP contracts annually, producers can choose not to participate in the program in any given year.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service saves producers time, reduces paperwork and speeds up contract processing at USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. It is available to all producers who are eligible to participate in DCP and who establish an eAuthentication account. The service has strict security measures to protect participants' private information. Only authorized federal employees have access to information producers submit electronically.

USDA computes DCP payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2007, eligible producers may request to receive direct advance payments based on **22 percent** of the direct payment rate for each commodity associated with the farm. USDA can issue DCP advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2006.

When you sign the CCC-509, you are agreeing to: comply with highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions on all your land;

devote acreage equal to the base acreage to an agricultural or conserving use;

effectively control noxious weeds and otherwise maintain base acres according to sound agricultural practices;

not plant perennial fruits and vegetables (FAV) or harvest annual FAVs on base acres;

file acreage report with respect to all cropland on the farm; and

notify the county office staff when there is a transfer of or change of interest of a producer.

The DCP contracts are not like the old seven-year Production Flexibility Contracts. You must designate shares and sign a new DCP contract each year.

**Online Services**

If you are among the growing number of producers that have access to the Internet at home, you might be interested in USDA's online services that are available to you. Here's a quick run down of available services.

• **The USDA Customer Statement:**

This provides the producer online access 24/7 to the farm's USDA business transactions in a single report accessed with one login and password. It includes participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs, farm loans, maps, and land unit information.

• **eLDP:**

Is the Farm Service Agency's electronic Loan Deficiency Payment Service. This allows producers to request LDPs online and, in most cases, receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

• **eDCP:**

Is the FSA's electronic Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program. This allows producers to enroll in DCP online, choose DCP payment options, assign crop shares, and sign and submit contracts, view and print them out at any time.

• **My USDA:**

Is an online portal the producer can create. It can be customized so that the news, reports, links, and USDA business data most important to the producer will immediately be viewable.

Stop by the county office for assistance in obtaining a USDA eAuthentication Service Level 2 Customer Account. This provides a single user ID and password that grants access to the Customer Statement, and many other USDA e-Services, including submitting forms online through USDA e-File, such as eLDP and eDCP.

**Special Accommodations**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office directly or by phone.

**Complaint Process**

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.

**Emergency Loans- Reminder!**

The USDA Secretary has designated Vermont as a natural disaster area. All Vermont farmers, who suffered significant damage due to severe weather conditions, including excessive rainfall and flooding, may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from FSA. These loans carry an interest rate of 3.75%.

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

**Producers** may borrow up to 100 percent of the actual production or physical losses, to a maximum of \$500,000. Loan applications will be accepted through **May 14, 2007**.

Please call the loan staff at 802-388-6748, extension 3 and ask to speak with a loan officer to see if you qualify for an Emergency Loan.

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.

### **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 form FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Forms obtained and completed outside USDA Service Center offices must be notarized. To find out more, call the office.

### **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.

### **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 been 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 wild-life habitat area of any type?***

***These are Highly Erodible and Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they may remain eligible for USDA benefits. Please contact your NRCS representative before you begin.***

### **Direct Deposit and Bank Account Changes**

As of January 1, 1999, all FSA payments are supposed to be electronically transferred into your bank account. Forms are available at the FSA office to sign up for direct deposit if you haven't yet. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. **It's very important that you realize you have the responsibility to notify FSA and NRCS individually of any change to your direct deposit account. Even though we are in the same office, each section has different rules and protocols that apply to direct deposits and electronic funds transfers.** Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers.

### **Change in Farming Operations**

Producers need to update signature authorization when there are any changes in the ownership/operating structure of their operation. Producers are reminded to contact the office to report any change in the operation on their farm so that records can be kept current.

### **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

Farmers are able to take advantage of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP will reimburse farmers for retiring cropland or pastureland adjacent to streams, ponds and rivers by establishing buffers. Program participants will receive annual rental payments, cost-share assistance, and other financial incentives for either 10, 15 or 30 year contracts for installing and maintaining forested riparian buffers or grass filter strips. Eligible cropland must have been *considered* row cropped 4 of the 6 years between 1996 and 2001. Pastures adjacent to waters do not carry this requirement.

The buffers and filter strips are narrow in width so contract acreage is minimal, BUT, payments are substantial to provide attractive incentive. Annual rental payments vary from \$58/ac to \$206/ac and sign up bonuses vary from \$140/ac to \$2055/ac. For more information about CREP call 388-6748, ext 15 or stop by the FSA office.



### **Foreign Buyers Notification**

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) 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 within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government officials, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these requirements.