



Franklin/Grand Isle County News

September 2008

Franklin-Grand Isle County FSA

27 Fisher Pond Rd.
Suite 2
St. Albans, VT 05478

Phone: (802) 527-1296
(800) 717-8637
Fax: (802) 524-4575
www.fsa.usda.gov

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

Farm Service Agency County Committee

Darlene Wright, Chairperson
Maurice Fortin, Vice Chairperson
Madonne Rainville, Member
Dwight Bullis, Member
Andrew Brouillette, Member

**NOTE: COC meets 3rd
Thursday each month at 11:00**

County Executive Director
Brenda Ladue (ext. 106)

Staff

Carolyn Church, P.T. (ext. 109)
George Godin, P.T. (ext. 107)
Luc Dupuis, P.T. (ext. 105)
Tracy Derry, P.T. (ext. 124)
Marguerite Noel, P.T. (ext. 100)
Dorothy Perkins, P.T. (ext. 113)

Loan Manager
Dirk Reith (ext. 110)

Loan Officers
Brad Parker (ext. 112)
Liz Vesosky (ext. 111)

**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**
Angela L. Biggs, D.C. (ext. 118)
Joanne Yousten, S.C. (ext. 115)
Sarah Larose, S.C. (ext. 127)
Diane Ladue, C.T. (ext. 121)
Diane Forey, P.A. (ext. 101)
Roslyn Odum, Ag. Eng. (ext. 128)
Ann Lansberry, C.T. (116)

**Natural Resources
Conservation District**
Renaé Masse, Manager (ext. 119)
Agricultural Land Treatment &
Conservation Planners:
Carla Fenner (ext. 117)
Trevor Lewis (ext. 120)
Mark Marsh (ext. 126)

Vermont Agency of Ag. Staff
Ben Gabos, CREP Planner,
(ext. 122)
Greg Bouchard, Civil Engineer,
(ext. 114)

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 below, as well as 3, is eligible to vote for county committee members:

1. Voter is of legal voting age and has an interest in a farm or ranch as either an individual; or is the authorized representative of an entity.
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 participate or cooperate in any USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) program that is provided by law.

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.

Sign Up Underway for the 2008

Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP)

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 was enacted into law on May 22, 2008. The Act provides for the continuation of the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) for 2008 through 2012.

Producers have until September 30, 2008 to sign up for the 2008 DCP. Producers can fill out their 2008 DCP contract at any USDA Service Center or Farm Service Agency County Office. Sign-up can also be completed online by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/edcp> and clicking on "Access eDCP Service." You can choose payment options, assign crop shares and sign and submit contracts from any computer with Internet access. You can also view and print submitted contract options.

Differences between 2007 and 2008 DCP - Producers on a farm will not receive direct or counter-cyclical payments if the sum of the base acres on the farm is 10 acres or less, unless 1 of the following exceptions is met:

1. The farm is wholly owned by a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.
2. The farm is wholly owned by a limited resource farmer or rancher.

FSA computes DCP payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2008, eligible producers may request to receive an advance payment of 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments as soon as practical after enrollment. Final direct payments will be issued after Oct. 1, 2008. Counter-cyclical payments vary depending on market prices, and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price (which takes into account the direct payment rate, market price and loan rate).

For all eligibility requirements or additional information, contact our office at 527-1296 or toll free in VT at 1-800-717-8637.

NAP Coverage

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, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

The application deadline dates for 2009 NAP coverage for forage, pasture and perennial crops is Dec 1, 2008; for maple sap and honey is Dec 31, 2008 and for spring seeded annual crops is March 15, 2009.

Increased fees apply to 2009 NAP. New Farm Bill rules set the application rate at \$250 per crop but not more than \$750 per producer per county or more than \$1875 total per producer for all counties. Producers who already have coverage on 2008 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2009, 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.

Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) or delete a crop(s) from previous year's coverage or changing crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee.

Producers with 2008 NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:

1. Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.
2. File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc. For more information on NAP coverage please contact your nearest Farm Service Agency office.



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Deadlines & Dates to Remember

Sept. 30, 2008 - DCP Sign up
Oct. 13, 2008 Office closed for Columbus Day
NAP applications deadlines:
Dec. 1, 2008 - forage, pasture and perennial crops
Dec. 31, 2008 - maple syrup and honey
March 15, 2009 - spring seeded annual crops
Dec. 1, 2008 Deadline for completed County Committee Election ballots to be received at the county office.

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.

Quantity & Quality Loss Crop Disaster Signup

Producers can apply for crop **quality** losses under the Crop Disaster Program (CDP). *Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.* The CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered losses to their 2005-2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions. Producers who incurred qualifying quantity or quality losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 may receive benefits for only one of these years. However, producers may apply for benefits for losses to multiple crops as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year. Producers must have suffered a **quantity** loss in excess of 35% and/or a **quality** loss of at least 25 percent to be eligible for CDP. New this year, it is required that the production must have suffered a 25% loss in economic value to be eligible for a quality loss payment. Economic loss is the actual value of the crop if it had been sold.

Quality Loss applications need to have the following:

- Crop measurements must be provided by a verifiable third party
- All lab tests taken on your forage crops

The payment rate is set at 65 percent of the amount of the affected crop multiplied by 42 percent of the per-unit average market value in the year in which the loss occurred. Producers may receive assistance for both quantity and quality losses. However, the total quantity and quality assistance, together with any crop insurance or NAP payment received for the same crop and the value of the crop production not lost, must not exceed 95 percent of the total value of the crop absent the disaster.

Payment Limitations

USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law. Documents and forms to determine eligibility and limitation are reviewed on an annual basis.

It is the producer's responsibility to report changes in the farming operation that may affect payment eligibility and payment limitation.

The following limitations apply to Direct and Counter-cyclical Program payments for the 2008 contract year. For all covered commodities: \$40,000 for direct payments and

\$65,000 for counter-cyclical payments. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program has a \$450,000 payment limitation. The Conservation Reserve Program annual limit is \$50,000 per person.

Adjusted Gross Income - Effective through 2008, an individual or entity shall **not** be eligible for certain program benefits during a crop, program or fiscal year if both of the following apply.

- The three-year average adjusted gross income for the individual or entity exceeds \$2.5 million; and
- Less than 75 percent of the average AGI is derived from farming, ranching or forestry operations.

NRCS News

Energy Costs, Corn, and EQIP With costs of fuel and fertilizer skyrocketing, the profit margin for growing corn has shrunk considerably. If you are considering cutting back on corn acreage or going to an all grass system, EQIP can help fund the transition. New seeding can be cost shared in some instances, and a range of pasture expenses can be covered to set up a grazing system. Sign up with NRCS by **October 1**. Call the NRCS if you would like help with preliminary planning.

Forest Management Now Included in EQIP Sign up with the NRCS by **Oct. 1st**. These Forest Stewardship Plans cover the full range of forest conservation. For more information call the NRCS.

Home Energy Saving Workshops are available for Vermont Communities. Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC), in partnership with the State of VT and the VT Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN), will implement a six-month public education program to mobilize Vermonters on how to save energy in their homes.

If you are interested in having a Home Energy Saving Workshop in your community, please contact Diana Peduzzi, Assistant Coordinator, Button-Up, Vermont at Button-up@cvcac.org 802 279 1708, or Paul Markowitz, coordinator, Button Up, Vermont at paul@markowitzvt.com (802 229 6307).

