



Franklin/Grand Isle County News

May 2009

Franklin-Grand Isle County

FSA
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Hours

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

Farm Service Agency County Committee

Maurice Fortin, Chairperson
Madonne Rainville, Vice-Chairperson
Dwight Bullis, Member
Andrew Brouillette, Member
Diane McGarry, 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)
Roslyn Odum, Ag. Eng. (ext. 128)
Ann Lansberry, C. E.T. (116)

Natural Resources

Conservation District

Renaë 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)

Service Agency (FSA) offers producers an alternative to Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) payments. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

ACRE payments are made when both state- and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments. Producers also elect to receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. ACRE sign-up dates will be announced soon so a producer can choose to participate in ACRE, or stay with DCP. **If you elect to enroll in the ACRE program, you must remain in the ACRE program until the expiration of the 2008 Farm Bill – you cannot change back to the DCP program once that change has been made.**

Disaster Buy-In Waiver Extension

Producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 can pay a buy-in fee through May 18, 2009, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Farmers have an additional opportunity to become eligible for several programs if they suffered 2008 agricultural losses due to natural disaster.

If you have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), you are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

- Pay a \$100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is \$300 per county, per producer, not to exceed \$900 for multi-county producers.
- In the case of each insurable crop, excluding grazing land, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.
- In the case of each noninsurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable state application closing date for the next available year.

Those who choose to "buy in" under this provision will be considered, for insured crops, to have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for the 2008 crop year at a level of coverage not to exceed 70 percent of the yield at 100 percent of the price. For noninsurable crops, producers will be considered to have a level of coverage equal to 70 percent of the yield. These levels of coverage will be used to calculate the 2008 SURE guarantee.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the buy-in fee. (A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. A limited resource farmer or rancher is one who has: 1) direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than \$116,800 in each of the previous two years, and 2) a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50% of county median household income in each of the previous two years. A beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who has not operated a farm or ranch; or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years. And the individual or entity must substantially participate in day-to-day operations of the farm or ranch. This applies to all members of the entity.)

DCP / ACRE

Signup has started for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program and continues until August 14, 2009. This deadline is mandatory for all participants. FSA will not accept late-filed applications.

FSA computes DCP Program 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 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

Producers eligible for the DCP Program are also able to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. ACRE is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill that begins in crop year 2009. Through ACRE, USDA's Farm

Dates to Remember

May 18 NAP 2008 Buy-in deadline
May 25 Memorial Day – Office closed
June 30 Acreage Reporting deadline for small grains
July 3 Independence Day (observed) – Office closed
July 15 Acreage Reporting deadline for all crops
Aug. 14 DCP enrollment deadline
Ongoing Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)
Ongoing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
Continues Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) sign up



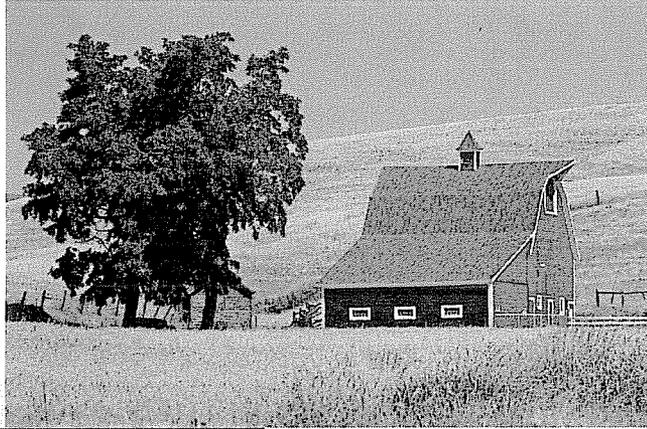
Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. 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 for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the June 30 deadline on small grains and a July 15 deadline on all other crops.

Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the earlier of June 30 for small grains and July 15 for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.



CREP, SAFE & Continuous CRP Available

At this time USDA has no general signups scheduled for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 2009. However, environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Conservation Reserve Program State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Practice, and Continuous CRP will still be eligible for enrollment. These targeted programs remain funded, and continue to provide a heightened environmental benefit on select areas.

NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2009 production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.**

Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, 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 necessary. 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.

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. There are additional requirements;

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;

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.

If payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded. See your local FSA office for details.

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Applications for FSA Loans

The demand for FSA loan funds has exceeded the non-beginning farmer and non-SDA allocations for operating and farm ownership loans in Vermont. A national pooling of those categories and non-SDA beginning farmer funds occurred on May 5th and 6th. The national fund reserves for operating loan funds for non-beginning farmer, non-beginning farmer SDA, and beginning farmer categories are expected to be depleted after the pooling. An additional appropriation from congress for this year will be needed to provide the funds to loan to farmers. The 2010 budget (after October 1st, 2009) will also provide funds to loan in the fall. Farmers and ranchers who intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance are encouraged to file their applications. Those applications that are approved will remain unfunded until congress appropriates loan funds. Contact your local FSA farm loan manager or officer for more details and assistance in applying.

Farm Loan Program Interest Rates as of May, 2009

Farm Operating-Direct 2.375% **Farm Ownership-Direct 4.250%** **Farm Ownership - Direct Joint Financing 5.00%**
Farm Ownership – Down Payment 1.50% **Emergency Loan – Amt. of Actual Loss 3.75%** ****Emergency 3.75%**
Farm Storage Facility 2.375%

Program	Interest Rates
Farm Operating – Direct	2.375%
Farm Ownership – Direct	4.250%
Farm Ownership – Direct Joint Financing	5.00%
Farm Ownership – Down Payment	1.50%
Emergency Loan – Amount of Actual Loss	3.75%
Emergency	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility	2.375%

Franklin-Grand Isle FSA May 2009 Newsletter Addendum

Dairy Farmers - Save Money on Workers Compensation Insurance

Workers Compensation Insurance is required for dairy farmers employing non-family labor with a payroll greater than \$10,000. Depending on several factors, workers compensation insurance premiums can be a large cost for dairy farmers. Implementing a safety program on your farm can reduce accidents and potentially reduce premium levels. Another way to manage your Workers Compensation costs is to utilize the options provide through legislation in 2008. As of July 1, 2008 dairy farmers can use these options to manage their Workers Compensation costs.

The Vermont Legislature passed legislation in 2008 that provides employers, including dairy farmers with 2 options to reduce their workers compensation premium costs.

Option 1:

The first option is the ability to pay for "minor" injuries and reporting those injuries to the Department of Labor. Health care for minor injuries totaling less than \$750.00 can be paid by the dairy farmer with the injury being reported to the Department of Labor. There is no legal requirement to report the injury to the Workers Compensation insurance company, but it must be reported to the Department of Labor. Reporting the injury to the Department of Labor covers the dairy farmer if further claims arise from the injury – for example a cut that required stitches become infected and requires further medical attention.

Option2:

The second option is to request a deductible as low as \$500 for your Workers Compensation policy. This deductible is similar to the deductible that is available on car insurance – your willingness to pay the first amount of the claim up to a set limit (e.g. the employer agrees to reimburse the insurer for the first \$500 of any claim.) Each person has to request a deductible for Workers Compensation. Once requested, under law, the insurance company has to provide a deductible. Having a deductible policy should lower your Workers Compensation rate.

Utilizing either option described above will save the employer money, but reducing the number of injuries in its workplace is the real key to saving money on Workers Compensation Insurance.

Please contact your Workers Compensation Insurance provider to discuss these recent changes to Vermont law. You can also contact the Vermont Department of Labor to discuss general Workers Compensation issues at 802-828-2138.

Request for Soybean Referendum May 4 – May 29

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced that it will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order, as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act.

The Request for Referendum will be conducted at county Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. To participate, producers must certify and provide documentation that shows that they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2007, through Dec. 31, 2008.

Beginning May 4, 2009, and continuing through May 29, 2009, producers may obtain a request form by mail, fax, or in person from the FSA county offices. Forms may also be obtained via the internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsmarketingprograms> during the same time period.

The deadline for returning the referendum request form is May 29, 2009. USDA will conduct a referendum if at least 10 percent of the nation's 589,182 soybean producers support a referendum. Not more than one-fifth of the producers who support having a referendum can be from any one state. For more information, contact your local FSA office.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) is designed to compensate producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality rates due to adverse weather that occurred on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011. Producers who had livestock deaths due to adverse weather conditions should document these losses as to the kind, weight range, number of livestock, and the date the animals were lost. Producers must have proof of death of livestock by the following means:

- Rendering truck receipts or certificates
- Veterinary records
- Dairy herd improvement records
- Third-party verification

The third party must certify in writing their name, address, telephone number, affiliation of the third party to the participant, details of knowledge of livestock deaths, and the number and kinds of livestock. The third party may not be someone who is affiliated with the operator, such as a hired hand, or family member. Producers should also document the loss by taking photos of the animal, keep veterinary records, record disposal costs and secure third-party verification.