



May 2007

## Orleans County News

### Farm Service Agency

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Newport, VT 05855-4877

334-6090-Phone  
1-866-241-2190 Toll Free Phone  
334-1365-Fax

### Hours

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

### County Committee

Scott Birch, Chair  
Brad Maxwell, Vice Chair  
Doug Lawson, Voting Member  
Donna Hammond, Minority Advisor

COC meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of  
each month.

### NRCS District

Karen O'Donnell, Clerk X18  
Marybeth Whitten, ARS X22  
Dee Nault  
Paul Daniels, Chair  
Betsy Inkel, Vice Chair  
Richard Delfavero, Treasurer  
Burton Strong  
William Ryan  
Darryl Mongeon

### NRCS Staff

David Blodgett, DC X25  
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David Gauvin, CET X23  
Brenda MacDonald-Kuper, SC X21  
Lance Gorham, SC X24  
Robert Long, SS X20  
Jessica Philippe, SS X19  
Charlotte Miller, PA X18

### Loan Staff

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Dorcas McAllister, FLO X15  
Cheryl Smith, PT X13  
Angela Goodridge, PT X12  
Meghan DuBois, FLOT X17

### Program Staff

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Laurie Locke, PT X16  
Brock Columbia, PT X26



### Land Changes

If you have added or dropped land, please contact the office to update your information. This will assist us in preparing for crop reporting and Direct and Counter-cyclical Program sign-up.



### A Note to FSA Borrowers

Please provide annual financial and production records for the 2006 year. Your 2006 IRS tax records may be substituted for financial records.

### Spring Planting/Crop Rotations

It is likely that many farmers are planning to plant additional acres of silage corn as a result of poor crop production last year and because of the increased cost of purchased feed.

**Reminder:** Farmers are still responsible for maintaining compliance with the Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation provisions of the Farm Bill. To ensure your continued eligibility for USDA programs and payments, you need to follow an approved crop rotation on any field designated HEL, and not make crop production possible on any areas considered to be wetland.

If you are making plans to plant annual crops on land where annual crops have not previously been planted, or planning to change approved crop rotations, please visit the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in your area to discuss your plans.

### Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have services completed on the farm. Measurement service guarantees compliance with a program, if the planting is limited to the measured area. Incorrect acreage through self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

### Farm Storage Facility Loans

Low cost loans for storage facilities are available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities, (including concrete bunks), for a variety of commodities, including small grains, soybeans and corn. The seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Eligible facilities include new conventional-type cribs or bins and new and remanufactured oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures. All Farm Storage Facility Loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85 percent of the net cost of the storage or handling equipment, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment is also required. For details, contact the county office staff.

### Conservation Compliance

Federal regulations discourage the production of crops on highly erodible cropland unless the land is protected from erosion by an approved conservation system. Status reviews are conducted to ensure producers follow a conservation plan on highly erodible land.

In addition to the highly erodible land, a person may not plant an agricultural commodity on wetland converted after Dec. 23, 1985, or convert a wetland to make agricultural production possible after Nov. 28, 1990.

Failure to comply with these provisions will cause a person to be ineligible for USDA benefits. County Committees may review noncompliance situations for good faith and provide relief in approved cases.

### Reporting Crop Acreage - 1<sup>st</sup> Deadline: June 30, 2007 For Small Grains

It goes by different names — crop report, acreage report, crop certification — but regardless of what you call it, filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. **ALL** cropland on the farm (including ALL HAY reports) *must be reported* to receive benefits from the **Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP), marketing assistance loans, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), and NAP (Non Insured Crop Disaster Program)**. Conservation Reserve Program acreage *must be reported* to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage that is enrolled in Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle/fallow or planted. Producers are required to file reports by **June 30<sup>th</sup>** for small grains and **July 15<sup>th</sup>** for all other crops.

**Note -- Prevented planting and failed acreage should also be reported.** Acreage reports for failed acreage must be filed within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

### CREP

Farmers and landowners in the county are encouraged to take advantage of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP will reimburse farmers for enrolling cropland or pastureland adjacent to streams, ponds and rivers from agricultural production. Program participants will receive annual rental payments, cost-share assistance, and other financial incentives for a period of 10-15 years for installing and maintaining buffer strips, riparian areas and grassed waterways.

### 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 for a maximum of up to \$200,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$899,000. 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 detail loan eligibility information or the different available loan programs, just contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



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.

### **Utilizing GIS**

The Farm Service Agency currently employs a Geographic Information System (GIS), a computer-based tool for capturing, storing, mapping and analyzing geographic farm data. FSA uses GIS to replace the old manual system of hard copy maps and aerial photographs. This digital technology is faster and more accurate than the old way, and saves taxpayers money over the long term.

Here's how GIS works. Up-to-date aerial photographs of the entire county are scanned so they can be stored in the computer. The photos become the base layer of the GIS. Technicians examine the photos and identify individual farms. They then outline each farm field, creating another layer of data called the Common Land Unit (CLU).

The software stores the shape of the field as a "polygon," and ties it to a specific location using latitude and longitude. The software can then automatically calculate the size of each field. The CLU layer will be connected to a database that contains information about the cropping history for each particular field.

GIS gives us the tools to provide quicker, more accurate information to producers and reduce the amount of time the producer must spend in the FSA office.

### **County Committee Nominations Open Now to Aug. 1, 2007**

Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency county committee election representing producers in Local Administrative Area 3 (LAA#3) will be accepted from now, through August 1, 2007. LAA #3 includes the towns of Derby, Holland, Morgan, Charleston, Brownington and Westmore.

Producers who are residents in LAA#3, who are eligible to participate or cooperate in an FSA program, and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers are encouraged to nominate candidates.

### **Beginning, Small and Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers:**

#### **Do You Require Financial Assistance to Fund Conservation Program Initiatives?**

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) have worked together to make conservation programs more available to beginning, small, and limited resource farmers. As producers move from initial contract development into the implementation stage under the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program, many face the inability to acquire the initial capital investment of their cost-share portion needed for contract implementation.

To help producers implement conservation measures, FSA has several loan programs available to assist with up-front costs. FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit otherwise. A primary objective of FSA's farm loan programs is to assist small, beginning, and socially disadvantaged (minority and female) producers. In fact, a portion of FSA's loan funds are reserved for beginning and socially disadvantaged producers. These loan programs are not new and have been used successfully in conjunction with conservation programs throughout the United States.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) and [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

### **Outreach Program**

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 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.

A socially disadvantaged person is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Contact the FSA County Office Farm Loan Program staff for more details about this program, and other financial options.