



June 2008

Orleans County News

Farm Service Agency

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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 2nd Wednesday of
each month.

NRCS District

Stephanie Sever, Dist Mgr X18
Dee Nault
Paul Daniels, Chair
Bill Lawson, Vice Chair
Richard Delfavero, Treasurer
Burton Strong
William Ryan
Darryl Mongeon

NRCS Staff

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

Program Staff

William Putnam, CED X28
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Laurie Locke, PT X16
Brock Columbia, PT X26

Sign-up Deadline for LCP

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that livestock producers have until **July 18, 2008**, to enroll in the 2005 - 2007 Livestock Compensation Program (LCP). LCP covers pasture loss and additional feed costs for the grazing year of May 15, 2006 through May 14, 2007. Additional feed (forages, additives, concentrates, extenders) must have been purchased and PAID FOR during the same time period to be eligible.

For more information please contact the FSA office for program sign-up details.

Crop Disaster Program (CDP)

Sign-up continues for the *quantity* part of the Crop Disaster Program (CDP). An ending date has not yet been announced. CDP-quantity provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity losses to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions. Producers who incurred qualifying losses must choose only one year to receive benefits. 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 quantity losses in excess of 35 percent to be eligible for CDP.****

Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

Software for County Offices to process CDP-*quality* loss applications will be released in late June. Sign-up for the Quality portion of CDP can occur before then. As we learn more about the program parameters and what documentation is required, we will be better able to convey to you what you will need to provide.

Crop Reporting

The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely 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 must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program, Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

The certification form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. The producer certification deadline for small grains is June 30 and for all other crops is July 15. However, we strongly encourage that you don't wait until the last minute, as data entry of all your crop reports is a time consuming process for the office staff as they struggle to meet mandated deadlines.

CRP, CREP & NAP Certification

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and CREP acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting is to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and 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.

COC Elections

The county committee election is held by mail. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 3, and must be returned to the FSA county office by the close of business on Dec. 1, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 1, 2008.

County Committee Elections (COC)

Orleans county is divided into three *local administrative areas*, or LAAs. Each LAA contributes one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee. Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. This year's election is for LAA #1 which includes the towns of Newport, Newport Center, Troy, North Troy, Jay, Lowell, Coventry and Westfield. The three steps in the election process are the call for nominations, the election and installing the new committee member.

Election Timetable

June 15 Nomination period begins.
Aug. 1 Deadline to submit nomination forms.
Nov. 3 Ballots are mailed to eligible voters.
Dec. 1 Deadline to return completed ballots to FSA county office.
Jan. 1, 2009 New committee members and alternates are installed.

Nominations Open June 15

Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency County Committee election representing producers in Local Administrative Area #1 (LAA #1) will be accepted from June 15 through Aug. 1, 2008. Brad Maxwell currently serves as the COC representative from LAA #1 and Donna Hammond serves as the COC Alternate as well as the Minority Advisor.

Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who 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 may also nominate candidates.

A nomination form, FSA-669A, is included in this newsletter. Additional forms and details may be picked up at your local USDA Service Center, FSA county office or downloaded from

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>

Eligible voters can nominate as many candidates as they wish.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected, and returned to the FSA county office by the close of business on Aug. 1, or postmarked by midnight Aug. 1, 2008.

Online Services

Producers, if you have Internet access you can electronically log on, fill out and print a variety of FSA paper forms in the comfort of your home as your schedule allows. You can also register for secure electronic access that will allow you to electronically sign and transmit some forms directly to the county office staff. If you are new to the website, first you will want to obtain a Level 2 USDA Service Center Customer ID and password at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and then click on "Create an Account Page" link.

USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. This includes things such as submitting forms electronically, completing surveys online, and checking the status of your USDA accounts.

If you already have a Customer ID and password, then click on the following eForms website at:

<http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet> and then click on the "Sign In" button. A disclaimer window will open and after you read the "Warning message" click on the "Continue" button.

Then the USDA Web services page will open to the eAuthentication login page. Enter your login User ID and password and then click on the "Login" button. To sign and transmit forms electronically, you must sign-up and get a User ID and password.

Submitting an e-Form is convenient. You can access information anytime day or night seven days a week. It's faster and forms and applications can be submitted and received in the county office in a matter of minutes, not days or weeks.

Controlled Substances

Program participants convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for program payments and benefits.

If convicted of one of these offenses, the program participant shall be ineligible during that crop year and the four succeeding crop years for direct and counter-cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible for any or all program payments and benefits:

- for up to 5 years after the first conviction
- for up to 10 years after the second conviction
- permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants convicted of federal or state offense for the possession of a controlled substance shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits, as follows:

- up to 1 year upon the first conviction
- up to 5 years after a second or subsequent conviction.

Direct and Guaranteed Loans

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are available now.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Loan funds can be made available. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

Most of our loan programs have special funding available for minority, female and beginning farmers.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office loan staff.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers

FSA has funding to assist beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center.

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 stake and referencing done on the farm.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request computerized data files of aerial photography and farm & field boundaries at no charge. Maps are also available showing acreage for all crop fields at the producer's request.

Special Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

GIS (Geographic Information System)

As part of a decade long program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. The Farm Service Agency manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment at more than 2,500 field service centers throughout the country.

Transitioning to the GIS environment has made good business sense for FSA for a variety of reasons. For one, CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of current ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). For years, FSA had been using hard copy maps that were 10 years old or more. During that time span, it was difficult to keep information accurate due to urban development and other land use changes. USDA Service Centers use NAIP in order to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.

Second, using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. In conjunction with yearly updated high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public.

Lastly, the GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples of outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

ARE YOU A GIS USER AT HOME? IF YOU ARE A FSA PROGRAM PARTICIPANT AND WOULD LIKE A FULLY ATTRIBUTED CLU CLIP OF YOUR PROPERTY, MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS PRODUCT DELIVERY WITH YOUR LOCAL COUNTY OFFICE SERVICE CENTER. MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMON LAND UNIT AND NAIP CAN BE FOUND BY VISITING ON-LINE, APFO (AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY FIELD OFFICE) AT WWW.APFO.USDA.GOV.

Things to keep in mind before construction . . .

▲ **Construction of New Farm Structures:** construction of new farm structures, specifically buildings and other farm related structures that disturb one or more acres of land must obtain authorization from the ANR before commencing with land disturbance or construction activities. Approval will be issued by ANR upon receipt of Notice of Intent (NOI) which certifies that adequate measures for the control of erosion and sedimentation will be used during land disturbance and construction efforts. Persons needing additional information about the Construction General Permit/NOI concerning one or more acres of land disturbance are advised to contact the Department of Environmental Conservation at 802-241-3770 or visit the web site at www.anr.state.us/dec/permits.htm.

▲ **Land disturbance for construction less than one acre:** farmers should consult their Town Zoning Board to determine if a permit is required, and what the set back requirements are for the town, before starting a project.

▲ Installation, replacement or change in a water or waste system in a farm operation may require a permit from ANR Wastewater Management Division. www.vtwaterquality.org/stormwater.htm. Farmers should also consult with their Town Zoning Board to determine what is required by the Town.

UVM Extension and Vermont Center for Independent Living Programs

Rural & Agricultural VocRehab (RAVR) -- Provides support for health evaluation, counseling, and assistance in job maintenance or placement for people with disabilities who reside in rural parts of Vermont and/or are employed in some form of agriculture. Contact information for RAVR: Rutland 802-773-3349 or 1-800-281-6977, St. Albans 802-524-6501 or 1-800-639-2130, St. Johnsbury 802-751-8307 or 1-800-545-8920

Vermont AgrAbility Project -- Their no cost services include information and referral, on-site and technical assistance, secondary injury prevention, peer support, training and education. Farmers eligible for *Vermont AgrAbility* services may have any type of acquired or traumatic disability--physical, cognitive or sensory. Contact information for *Vermont AgriAbility Project*: William Snow, 802-223-2389, 866-860-1382, or via e-mail: william.snow@uvm.edu

One or both of these programs could help with the following (to list a few examples): Personal Employment Plans; Counseling and Guidance; Job Training; Worksite/Homesite modifications; Machinery/Homesite Adaptations.

These programs could help producers who have arthritis, Parkinson's, repetitive use problems, hearing loss as well as providing assisted technology solutions, etc.

ORGANIC PASTURE & LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP SERIES

These Workshops...

- ❖ Will cover a variety of topics including grazing management, livestock nutrition, paddock design, management strategies, animal health, soil quality, financial planning and other topics of interest
- ❖ Are a great opportunity to meet up with other farmers to share experiences and knowledge
- ❖ Are a place to connect with regional service providers for support
- ❖ Are hosted by a wide range of Vermont's Organic and innovative dairy and livestock farms
- ❖ Are facilitated by NOFA-VT's Dairy & Livestock Technical Assistance Program staff: Sarah Flack and Willie Gibson
- ❖ Are *FREE* for all organic and transitioning dairy & livestock farmers
- ❖ \$10 NOFA-VT members, \$15 non-members.

Resource materials and books from the NOFA-VT bookstore will be available for sale.

Drinks and snacks provided. BYO lunch.

To register, or for more information about any workshop including directions:

Contact NOFA-VT: 434-4122; info@nofavt.org

Workshop Support Provided By:

The Freeman Foundation

USDA Risk Management Agency

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture

VT Pasture Network at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Local Workshop Dates and Host Farms

Organic Dairy Grazing:

Thursday July 24th 10am-12pm

Cross Road Dairy, Newport Center.

Pasture walk lead by Sarah Flack with discussion facilitated by Willie Gibson on organic livestock management, healthcare, fly control, record keeping, grazing, forage quality and more. Co-hosted with the VT Pasture Network at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

From Newport Center- At blinking traffic light, head west on Cross Road, after railroad tracks bear left. Farm is 2nd on the left. Or from Troy- Head north on Rt 100 3 miles. Make left on to Cross Road. Farm is about 2 miles, first farm on the left. Tom and Bonnie Boutin 334-2081

Organic Dairy Grazing: Thursday September 11th 10am-12pm

Maple Lane Farm, Cabot.

Pasture walk lead by Paul Stecker and Willie Gibson with discussion of organic livestock management, healthcare, fly control, record keeping, grazing, forage quality and more.

From Rt 2 Marshfield- Take Rt. 215 into Cabot across from post office take Right on to Danville Hill Rd. After 1 mile turn left on to Menard Rd. Farm is 3/4 mile down on Paul and Kristine Stecker 563-2646

Please contact NOFA for other workshop dates and host farms in different areas of the State.

Resource Guide for New Farmers

There is a great resource guide available on the web entitled "**RESOURCE GUIDE FOR VERMONT'S NEW AND ASPIRING FARMERS**". The guide contains info on FSA, NRCS, NOFA, UVM Extension, Women's Agricultural Network and many more. The guide also contains articles on Access to Capital, Production Knowledge, Skills and Technical Assistance, farm land, and markets and marketing. The web site is: <http://www.vermontagriculture.com/agdev/newfarm.htm>

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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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 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. 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;

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.

Producers or owners should notify Brock Columbia at the FSA office about ANY changes in land ownership and subdivisions!

Sodbuster Regulations

The term "sodbusting" is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985. Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in Farm Service Agency programs. Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage before bringing land into production. In addition, producers and the producer's affiliates have to file an AD-1026 with the staff in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer's signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation provisions will not be violated.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information. If you want a crop loan, a power of attorney form will need to be completed for husband and wife, if both do not come into the office to sign the forms on the day the loan is disbursed.