



September 2008

Orleans County News

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Buy-In Waiver

Producers can establish 2008 eligibility for the new disaster assistance programs by paying a fee as required by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill).

Ordinarily producers who wish to participate in the new disaster programs would need crop insurance or non-insured crop disaster assistance (NAP) coverage on all farms in all counties in which they have an interest. Since the 2008 Farm Bill was enacted after the application periods had closed for those programs, producers who did not have insurance coverage could not comply with this requirement in order to be eligible. However, the Farm Bill authorizes a waiver that allows producers to pay a fee, called a "buy-in" fee, to be eligible for the new disaster assistance programs.

The buy-in fee is due no later than Sept. 16, 2008, 90 days after the date of enactment, as required by the 2008 Act. Payment of the applicable fees will allow the producer to be eligible for financial assistance under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), and other disaster assistance programs. Those who miss this opportunity will **not** be eligible for 2008 disaster assistance. Producers are also reminded that the payment of the applicable buy-in fee does **not** provide the producer crop insurance or NAP coverage; it only affords eligibility for the disaster programs.

The 2008 Farm Bill created new disaster programs which require that producers have crop insurance for **ALL** insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for **ALL** noninsurable crops for all farms in all counties in which they have an interest. In Vermont, this would include **ALL** commercial production of corn, hay, soybeans, maple, fruits, vegetables, tree fruits, etc., **including pastureland grazed by livestock.**

Unlike previous disaster programs that were crop specific, new disaster programs are focusing on economic loss (or total farm revenue loss) and not just for one particular crop but for all crops harvested for the entire farming operation.

Application fees are waived for:

1) **Socially Disadvantaged farmer** who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

These groups consist of the following:

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics.

2) **Limited resource farmer** is a producer with both of the following:

- direct or indirect gross farm sales of not more than \$100,000 in both of the previous 2 years.
- total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of 4, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in both of the previous 2 years, to be determined annually using Commerce Department data.

3) **Beginning farmer:** an individual or entity who:

- has **not** operated a farm for more than 10 years (applies to all members of an entity).
- will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- in the case of an entity, all of the members or stockholders in a corporation are qualified beginning farmers or ranchers.

VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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.

NAP coverage for 2009 costs \$250 per crop, but not more than \$750 per producer per county, or not more than \$1875 total per producer for all counties.

The application deadline dates for 2009 NAP coverage for forage 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.

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

- **Timely file acreage reports**
- **Report harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.**
- **File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc.**

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000. Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. The FSA staff can help you with questions you may have about a particular program.

County Committee Elections

A slate of nominees for your county committee election has been established. Ballots will be mailed on November 3, 2008. Voters have until December 1, 2008, to return their properly completed ballots to the county office.

Prospective Voter Requirements - Anyone who meets the requirements in either, 1 or 2, as well as item number 3, is eligible to vote for county committee members.

1. Voter is of legal voting age and participates or cooperates in any FSA program, or
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 be eligible to participate in any FSA program provided by law, regardless of the status of funding.

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.

Farm Service Agency

59 Waterfront Plaza, Ste 11
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 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

David Blodgett, DC X25
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Dorcas McAllister, FLO X15
Cheryl Smith, PT X13
Angela Goodridge, PT X12
Meghan DuBois, FLOT X17

Program Staff

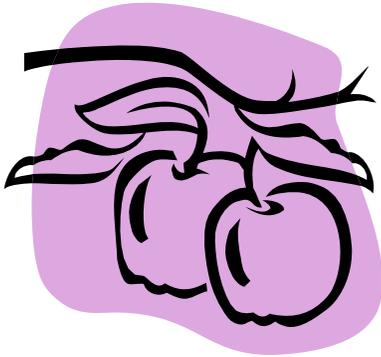
William Putnam, CED X28
William.putnam@vt.usda.gov
Laurie Locke, PT X16
Brock Columbia, PT X26



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.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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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.***

There will not be a quality loss program available for farm stored corn silage due to new regulations. (Corn sold must have evidence of 25% or greater loss in sale value due to quality.) The County Committee has documentation of widespread weather related losses in 2006 forage. Individuals with losses in 2005 or 2007 may also apply, but will be required to identify a weather related cause for the loss in quality. A minimum of 25% loss of feed quality will apply for the CDP-Quality Loss Program. Producers will need to provide verifiable measurements of ALL hay/haylage (by cutting) produced in the loss year and **ALL crop tests** taken for each cutting. Producers should contact their crop consultants for assistance in providing verifiable documentation or call the county office for further program details.

2008 DCP Signup Continues

Producers have until September 30, 2008 to signup in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) for this fiscal year. Participants can expect their final direct payment to be directly deposited into personal bank accounts sometime during the first few weeks of October. Producers who did not elect to receive an advance direct payment will receive their entire direct payment for the year in one lump sum after the end of the fiscal year (September 30). The direct payment for a crop equals 85 percent of the farm's base acreage *times* (x) the farm's direct payment yield *times* (x) the direct payment rate.

Home Energy Saving Workshops Available for Vermont Communities

Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC), in partnership with the State of Vermont and the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN), will implement an intensive six-month public education program to mobilize Vermonters on how to save energy in their homes. Through a series of two-hour workshops around the state, citizens will learn about the fundamentals of how buildings lose energy and do-it-yourself opportunities for saving energy, including behavioral changes and low-cost weatherization measures. ***We are inviting you to sign up today for a Home Energy Savings Workshop in your community.***

This program will draw upon town energy committees and other community groups to coordinate workshops within each participating town. The goal of the program is to conduct home energy savings workshops in 100 communities -- reaching 10,000 households. Participating energy committees and civic groups will have primary responsibility for organizing the workshop for interested residents, distributing educational materials, working with local retailers to provide discounted weatherization materials, and publicizing the program in their communities.

Workshops will be conducted by a select group of trained, certified energy auditors delivering a prepared presentation/slide show. Workshops are scheduled to begin in late-September. Button-Up, Vermont will provide educational and publicity materials and will arrange for a trained energy auditor to come to your community at no-cost. In late September, we will organize a series of regional sessions throughout the state to provide more information about the program. After hearing from you, we will follow-up with you about the times and availability of the briefing sessions in your area and how to participate in the program.

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).

Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District Seeking Local Producer Participation

These days, with the increasing fuel and food costs, the 'buy local' and 'localvore' movements have been spreading across Vermont, and the United States as a whole. Many communities have come together to create avenues through which residents and visitors to the region can easily find and access locally grown products and services. This past June, Caledonia and Essex (two, neighboring Northeast Kingdom counties) published their first Local Growers Guide to create such an avenue. The Guide was such a success, that Orleans County will be joining forces with Caledonia and Essex to collaboratively produce the Northeast Kingdom Local Growers Guide, to be released in June 2009. Many local farms, farmers markets, pick-your-own operations and CSA's (Community Supported Agriculture) are present in this area, however tracking those down can prove difficult. The Guide allows easy access to farms, farm stands and producers and provides details on the goods and services offered by each operation, listed by location. This free guide will increase the ability of citizens and visitors to 'buy local', support local agriculture and consume more nutritious food, while reducing the need to ship products from afar, thus limiting our resource use.

Farmers, producers and distributors of locally grown products in Orleans County are encouraged to contact the Orleans County NRCD for an application for inclusion in the Guide. There is no cost for the listing. To obtain an application, please contact Stephanie at the Orleans County NRCD office at 802-334-8325 ext. 18 or stephanie.sever@vt.nacdnet.net. The deadline for inclusion in the Guide is March 1, 2009.