



October 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
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NRCS Staff

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Angela Goodridge, PT X12
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Brock Columbia, PT X26



Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office staff if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers

Final Payments for 2008 DCP

Enrolled producers can expect their final direct payment to be deposited directly 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 (Sept. 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.

Do you have a DCP Contract for 10 acres or less?

Originally the new Farm Bill would not allow for payment on contracts less than 10 acres. **Recent legislation by Congress now allows for payment on contracts for 10 acres or less.** Please contact the County Office to check on the status of your DCP contracts. Be sure to sign up any remaining contracts you might have that are for 10 acres or less.

Sign up deadline for these contracts is Nov 26, 2008.

GIS Mapping

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 for all 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.

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.

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.

County Committee Elections

Just a reminder: Be watching your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters in LAA#1 starting on November 3, 2008.

LAA #1 includes the towns of Newport, Newport Center, Troy, North Troy, Jay, Lowell, Westfield and Coventry. If you live in one of these towns and don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office. **Completed and signed ballots are due back in the county office by the close of business on December 1, 2008.**

Conservation District News

You are invited!

The Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District will be holding their annual meeting on Thursday, October 23. Scheduled for the event is an afternoon tour of a newly installed methane digestion system. We will explore the facilities and discuss the components involved in the operation. Following the tour, the group will gather at the East Side Restaurant and enjoy dinner and a keynote speaker. The afternoon tour is free for all to attend. If you are planning on joining us for dinner, you can contact OCNRC to reserve your seat for \$15 through October 22. While pre-registration is not necessary, seating is limited, so reserve your spot today. Remaining tickets will be \$20 at the door.

REMINDER...Don't be left out of the first edition of the Northeast Kingdom Local Growers Guide! Applications for inclusion in the guide are being accepted now. The guide is a collaborative effort between Caledonia, Essex and Orleans County Conservation Districts to promote the vast agricultural resources of the Northeast Kingdom. Funding for the project is provided by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. If you distribute locally grown goods, or products made from locally grown materials, and want to advertise in a free, widely distributed publication, contact Stephanie at OCNRC today! You can reach OCNRC by calling Stephanie Sever at 334-8325 ext.18 or emailing stephanie.sever@vt.nacdnet.net.

Acreage Spot Check

Determinations and Notification

Each year the Farm Service Agency completes spot checks of acreage reports. Acreage reports are an integral part of farm program participation. Acreage spot checks are completed to ensure accurate acreage reports are used in farm program computations. FSA will conduct spot checks on a selected number of farms in each state. Color imagery flown in summer 2008 will be used to verify all crops. All acreage determinations will be completed using the FSA Geographic Information System official acreages. After farms are spot checked, a Notice of Determined Acreage will be sent to the farm operator. Producer notifications will be issued by FSA as spot checks are completed. Questions concerning determined acres should be directed to your local FSA office for further explanation.

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.

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 as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans, as of October 1, 2008, can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,094,000. 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 detailed information, just contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.

FSA Farm Loans Available For Beginning Farmers or Ranchers

Beginning farmers or ranchers can get a "regular" farm ownership loan by using funds set aside especially for them by the Farm Service Agency. These loans can be financed up to 40 years. The regular farm ownership loan funds may also be used in joint financing where FSA lends up to 50 percent of the amount financed and another lender provides 50 percent or more. FSA may charge an interest rate of not less than 4 percent with terms up to 40 years.

Beginning Farmer Down Payment Ownership Program (10-40-50)

Purpose: Obtain help financing the purchase of a farm up to \$250,000 of the purchase price or the appraised value whichever is less. The applicant must put down 10 percent. The Farm Service Agency finances up to 40 percent of the purchase price. The remaining 50 percent of the purchase price can be financed on contract with the seller or through a conventional lender. The lender can obtain a guarantee from FSA if the customer is eligible.

Qualification: Beginning farmer applicants must have been farming for at least three years and not more than ten. Applicants cannot own real estate that exceeds 30 percent of the average farm size for the county.

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.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

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.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or to improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for Socially Disadvantaged Applicants. A socially disadvantaged applicant 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.

If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.