



NEWSLETTER



May 2011

Windsor-Orange FSA Office

28 Farmvu Drive
White River Jct., VT 05001

800-789-6713 toll free
802 295-7942 phone
802 296-3654 fax

www.fsa.usda.gov

Hours

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

County Staff

Christine Lary
County Exec. Director X 13

George Button Jr.
Farm Loan Manager X 15

County Committee

Paul Doton, COC Chair
Heidi Dolloff
Michael Emerson
Agnes Spaulding
Sandra Whitney

Farm Field Practices Workshops

The Agency of Agriculture is holding a series of workshops aimed at providing information to farmers and their staff to explain farm field regulations. The presentation is geared especially to field workers and custom operators and defines Vermont's water quality field regulations. The workshops will also provide helpful tools for remembering the regulations. Information for all farm sizes will be presented at the White River Junction USDA Service Center on Thursday, May 12, 2011 between 10am and 1pm. For information, contact Sylvia Harris at 802 254-5323 X 105 or Abbi Pajak at 802 828-139

Emergency Loans Available

Farmers who suffered severe physical losses due to blizzard, excessive snow, freeze, high winds, freezing rain, ice, and sleet that occurred during the period February 2, 2011 and continuing, may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency. These loans carry an interest rate of 3.75 percent. Eligible farmers can use emergency loan funds to repair or rebuild essential farm buildings, clean debris or prepare land for replanting, and to replace livestock, supplies and harvested crops on hand or in storage which were lost.

Acreage Certification

Time is nearing for producers to certify their 2011 acreage. 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. Farms enrolled in NAP, GRP, CRP or DCP are all required to report acreage no later than July 15, 2011. Other farm operations are also encouraged to report acreage, and may do so until July 15, 2011. Farms enrolled in NAP must report 2010 crop production for NAP crops no later than July 14, 2011.

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.

Cold Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Storage Facility Loan program allows producers to build cold storage facilities to store their fresh fruits and vegetables. To be eligible, cold storage facilities must have a useful life of 15 years and include:

- New structures suitable for a cold storage facility;
- New walk-in, prefabricated, permanently-installed coolers suitable for storing fresh fruits and vegetables;
- New permanently affixed cooling, circulating and monitoring equipment;
- Electrical equipment integral to the proper operation of a cold storage facility;
- An addition or modification to an existing storage facility.

USDA will not make cold storage facility loans for portable structures, portable handling and cooling equipment, used or pre-owned structures, cooling equipment or structures deemed unsuitable. The maximum loan amount for a Farm Storage Facility loan is \$500,000 per loan, which requires a down payment of at least 15 percent. Applications must be approved before construction can begin. Loan terms of seven, 10 or 12 years are available .

2009 SURE Program Equitable Relief Policy

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain catastrophic level crop insurance (CAT) on all crops in all counties, or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). FSA is currently processing applications for the 2009 SURE program. Some farms which missed the deadlines to purchase 2009 CAT and NAP policies, which might consequently not qualify for SURE benefits, may be eligible for "equitable relief". The Vermont FSA state committee has authority to grant equitable relief on a case-by-case basis for producers who unintentionally missed the 2009 coverage deadline. If granted equitable relief, farms are required to pay a \$250 per crop (maximum \$750 per county) administrative fee. The farm would, then, be eligible for consideration under the 2009 SURE program. Normal SURE program rules will apply for farms granted equitable relief by the state committee.

Hispanic and Women Farmers

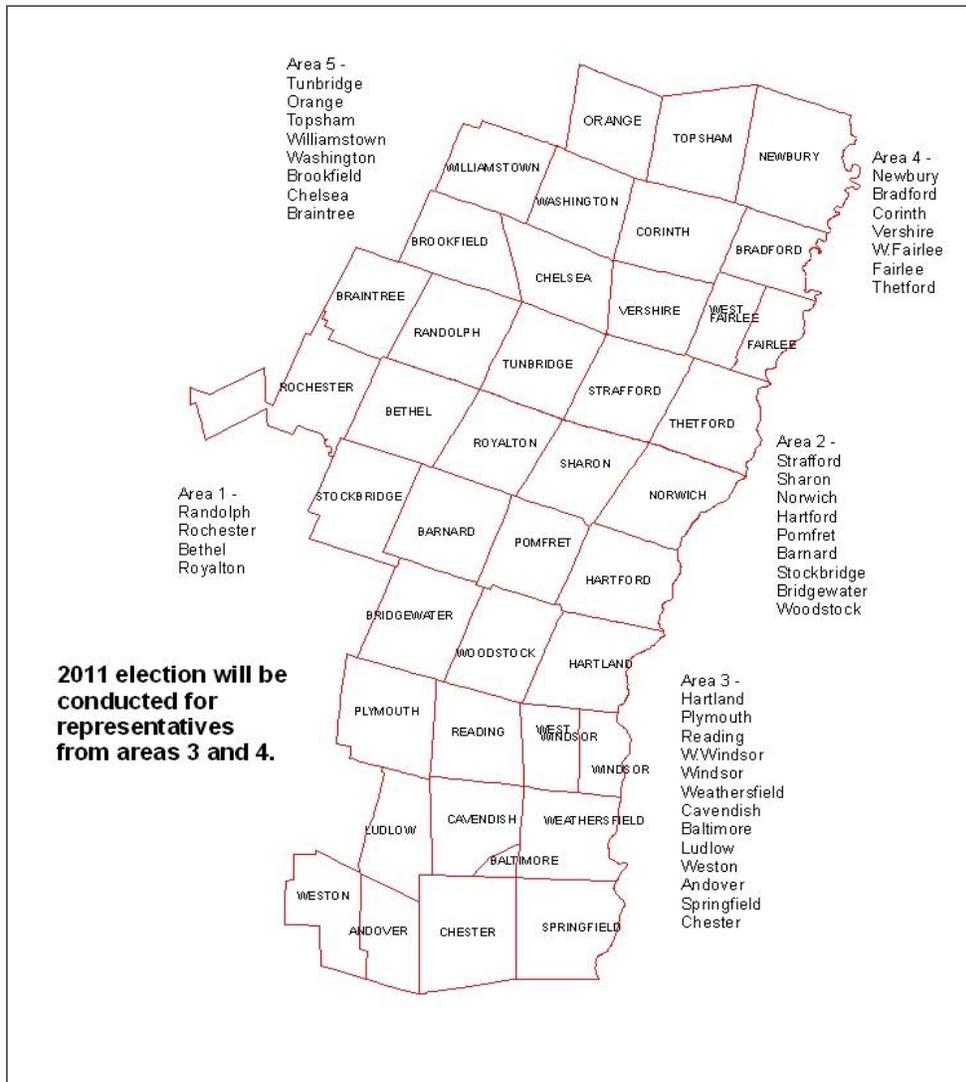
A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans is being established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

- **Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process, please visit:**
www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429;
- **Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation, please visit:**
www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547;
- **Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement please visit:**
www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506.

2011 County Committee Election

FSA is now accepting 2011 nomination forms from eligible voters for the Windsor-Orange county FSA committee. This year's election will be held for committee members from local area 3 (towns of Andover, Cavendish, Chester, Hartland, Ludlow, Plymouth, Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, Weston, West Windsor and Windsor), and local area 4 (towns of Bradford, Corinth, Fairlee, Newbury, Thetford, Vershire, and West Fairlee). Nomination forms may be obtained at the White River Junction FSA office, or by visiting FSA's website www.fsa.usda.gov. Call if you wish to receive a nomination form in the mail. Any eligible voter in one of the five local areas may nominate a candidate for the local areas 3 and 4 elections!



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ACRE

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. The June 1, 2011, signup deadline is mandatory for all participants. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.

A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. The payment is based on 83.3% (85% in 2012) of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the state ACRE guarantee and the state revenue times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield. The total number of planted acres for which a producer may receive ACRE payments may not exceed the total base on the farm. In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20%, and marketing loan rates are reduced by 30%.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.