



U.S. Department of
Agriculture

**Caledonia/Essex
County FSA**
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Hours

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

County Committee

Burt Patenaude, Chair
Robert Porter, Vice Chair
William Nelson, Member
Michael Tanguay, Member
Patricia Willey, Member

**COC meets 3rd Thursday
of each month at 10:30 am**

**County Executive
Director**

Patricia Passut (x104)
patricia.passut@vt.usda.gov

Program Staff

Patty Matte, PT (x100)
Donna Rae Heath, COR

Farm Loan Staff

(802) 334-6090 or
1-866-241-2190 (toll free)
Brian Kuper, FLM
Diane Gilman, FLO
Dorcas McAllister, FLO

NRCS Staff

www.nrcs.usda.gov
Tim McKay, DC (x109)
Nick Comerchi, SC (x101)
Daniel O'Brien, ITS (x113)
Roger DeKett, SS (x111)

NRCD Staff

Andrea Machell (x116)
Kerry O'Brien, (x110)
Caledonia District Mgr
Tamara Stevens, (x114)
Essex District Mgr
Brandon Carpenter, (x106)
Land Treatment Planner

Rural Development

www.rd.usda.gov
Steve Campbell, (x102)
Area Director
Cheryl Ducharme, (x107)
Loan Specialist
Suzanne Smith, (x112)
Area Technician
Linere Silloway, (x120)
RD Technician



Farm Service Agency

FSA UPDATES

January
2007

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Patricia Willey! Pat was re-elected to represent farmers from Hardwick, Sheffield, Stannard, Sutton, Walden, and Wheelock on the county committee. The election results for Local Administrative Area 1 are:

Patricia Willey — Re-elected to the county committee (COC),

Congratulations to Michael Tanguay! Mike was elected to represent farmers from Brunswick, Concord, East Haven, Guildhall, Granby, Lunenburg, Maidstone, and Victory on the county committee. This is Mike's first term on the committee. The election results for Local Administrative Area 5 are:

Michael Tanguay — Elected to the county committee (COC),
Stephen Russo — 1st alternate to COC



FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

A special thank you goes out to Richard (Stretch) Martin for his dedication and commitment to area farmers by serving on the county committee. He has stepped down after 27 years of service on the COC.

Wool/Mohair/Unshorn Pelt LDPs

For crop year 2006--January 31, 2007 is the final deadline to apply for a 2006 crop wool/mohair/unshorn pelt Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP).



LDP rates are announced every Wednesday. The current ungraded wool LDP price is 23 cents per pound and the mohair LDP price is 46 cents per pound. The payment for unshorn pelts is calculated as follows 6.865 lbs. X ungraded wool rate = price paid per pelt.

For crop year 2007— There is a form that producers need to sign once per crop year, indicating their intention to apply for a Loan Deficiency Payment. This form must be signed and submitted prior to losing beneficial interest in the crop. Please contact the office for more details.

Emergency Loans- Reminder!

The USDA Secretary has designated Vermont as a natural disaster area. All Vermont farmers, who suffered significant damage due to severe weather conditions, including excessive rainfall and flooding, may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from FSA. These loans carry an interest rate of 3.75%.

Production Losses - Eligible farmers can also use emergency loan funds to recover a portion of losses on growing crops that were destroyed.

Producers may borrow up to 100 percent of the actual production or physical losses, to a maximum of \$500,000. Loan applications will be accepted through **April 23, 2007**.

Please call the loan staff at 802-334-6090 or toll free at 1-866-241-2190 and ask to speak with a loan officer to see if you qualify for an Emergency Loan.

MILCX Program

Payment rates for: Dec \$0.4284000/cwt Jan \$0.0340000/cwt

Reminder: Producers that are either new to dairy or have not signed up for benefits have until Sept. 30, 2007 to enroll in the extension of the MILC program.



Vermont Target Price Program (state program)

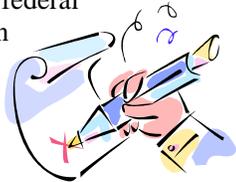
The Vermont Target Price Program mailed final checks on December 14, 2006. The final checks were paid at \$1.06541 per hundred weight based on October milk production. For more information or payment questions, please contact Diane Bothfeld or Byron Moyer at 828-2430, or visit their website http://www.vermontagriculture.com/Emergency_Assistance

Annual DCP Enrollment

The 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) sign-up began October 1, 2006, and continues until June 1, 2007. Farmers are encouraged to sign up for the DCP program online or at the FSA office. The online service is an example of the technological innovation USDA is using to make its programs more accessible.

Following the June 1, 2007, deadline, USDA will accept late applications through Sept. 30, 2007, with a \$100 late fee. While DCP participants must sign DCP contracts annually, producers can choose not to participate in the program in any given year.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service saves producers time, reduces paperwork and speeds up contract processing at USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. It is available to all producers who are eligible to participate in DCP and who establish an eAuthentication account. The service has strict security measures to protect participants' private information. Only authorized federal employees have access to information producers submit electronically.



USDA computes DCP payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. **For 2007, eligible producers may request to receive direct advance payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment rate for each commodity associated with the farm. USDA can issue DCP advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2006 if eligibility requirements are met.**

When you sign the CCC-509, you are agreeing to:

- comply with highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions on all your land;
 - devote acreage equal to the base acreage to an agricultural or conserving use;
 - effectively control noxious weeds and otherwise maintain base acres according to sound agricultural practices;
 - not plant perennial fruits and vegetables (FAV) or harvest annual FAVs on base acres;
 - file acreage report with respect to all cropland on the farm; and
 - notify the county office staff when there is a transfer of or change of interest of a producer.
- The DCP contracts are not like the old seven-year Production Flexibility Contracts. You must designate shares and sign a new DCP contract each year.

Direct Deposit

Forms are available at the FSA office to sign up for direct deposit if you haven't yet. For those already signed up, it is important that we are notified anytime there is a change in your account number or financial institution. You need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. If we aren't notified, future payments can be delayed or lost for a period of time.

Farm Storage Needed?

Low cost loans for storage facilities are available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, rice, 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. The interest for January is 4.50%.

Applications for FSA Farm Loan Assistance

Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager or Officer for more details and assistance in applying.

Power of Attorney

If you're too busy getting work done around the farm to come into your local FSA office to conduct business and complete your paperwork, here's a solution. Retain an agent to act on your behalf for programs and transactions authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill and most other FSA administered programs. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Forms obtained and completed outside USDA Service Center offices must be notarized. To find out more, call the office.

Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.



Change in Farming Operations?

Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so records can be kept current and accurate.

Attention Producers, Landowners!



- Do you intend to clear timber areas to create or to expand existing crop areas?
 - Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
 - Are there any areas on your farm(s) that you are considering cropping that have not been cropped in recent years?
 - Is there a wet spot in a field that you want drain to make cropping easier?
 - Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?
 - Are you doing anything different on your farm(s) this year?
- These are Highly Erodible and Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they may remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any question or concern that something you plan to do on your farm could jeopardize your eligibility for benefits, please contact your NRCS representative before you begin work.

Payment Limitation/Eligibility

USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law. Documents and forms to determine eligibility and limitation once completed are reviewed on an annual basis. It is the producer's responsibility to report changes in the farming operation which may affect payment eligibility and payment limitation. The following payments apply to DCP for each contract year under the new Farm bill comes through both direct and counter-cyclical payments. For all covered commodities, except peanuts: \$40,000 for direct payments and \$65,000 for counter-cyclical payments. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program has a \$450,000 payment limitation total for fiscal years 2002 – 2007. The Conservation Reserve Programs annual limit is \$50,000 per person. Entities such as corporations, limited partnerships, trusts and estates are required to provide names, addresses, and ID numbers of their members.

Status Date

The status of an individual or entity on April 1 of the applicable program year is the basis for determining the number of "persons" for payment limitation purposes for that year. Actions taken by an individual or entity after that date to increase the number of "persons" will not be recognized for the current program. For example, if an individual holds more than 50 percent interest in a corporation, as of the status date, the individual and entity will be considered one "person" for the applicable year.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Online Services

If you are among the growing number of producers who have access to the Internet at home, you might be interested in USDA's online services that are available to you. Here's a quick run down of available services.

The USDA Customer Statement. This provides the producer online access 24/7 to the farm's USDA business transactions in a single report accessed with one login and password. It includes participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs, farm loans, maps, and land unit information.

eLDP is the Farm Service Agency's electronic Loan Deficiency Payment Service. This allows producers to request LDPs online and, in most cases, receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

eDCP is the FSA's electronic Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program. This allows producers to enroll in DCP online, choose DCP payment options, assign crop shares, and sign and submit contracts, view and print them out at any time.

My USDA is an online portal the producer can create. It can be customized so that the news, reports, links, and USDA business data most important to the producer will immediately be viewable.



Call the county office for assistance in obtaining a USDA eAuthentication Service Level 2 Customer Account. This provides a single user ID and password that grants access to the Customer Statement, and many other USDA e-Services, including submitting forms online through USDA e-File, such as eLDP and eDCP.

Complaint Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have four choices – an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation, appeal to State Committee and appeal to the USDA National Appeal Division (NAD).

Civil Rights Complaint Process

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint with 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

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."

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Farmers are able to take advantage of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP will reimburse farmers for retiring cropland or pastureland surrounding 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 15 years for installing and maintaining forested riparian buffers or grass filter strips.

Eligible cropland must have been row-cropped 4 of the 6 years between 1996 and 2001. Marginal pastureland is also eligible, but only for riparian buffers, and if the land is adjacent or parallel to streams.

For more information about CREP call the FSA office or stop by the county office.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office directly or by phone.

Dates to Remember

Jan 23-25	Farm Show in Barre
Jan 31	Application deadline for crop year 2006 Wool/Mohair/Unshorn Pelt LDP
Feb 19	Office Closed for George Washington's Birthday
April 23	Deadline to apply for Emergency Loans
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loans Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Vermont Farm Show Workshop

A Workshop on USDA Rural Development's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Grants and Value Added Producer Grants will be held in Alumni Hall at the Vermont Farm Show in Barre, VT on January 25, 2007 from 9:00-11:00 am.

Lyn Millhiser, Business and Cooperative Programs Specialist, will be presenting the workshop for agricultural producers and rural small businesses. For more information contact her at 802-828-6069.

Energy Grant Funds are available for agricultural producers and rural small businesses to assist costs for the purchase and installation of renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements.

Value-Added Producer Grant Funds are available to conduct feasibility studies, marketing plans, and business plans to help establish marketing opportunities for agricultural producers wanting to market value-added products

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) Position Available

NASDA would like to hire survey interviewers with knowledge of agricultural practices for part-time, intermittent telephone and field interviewing in our area.

The position of agricultural enumerator entails collecting data by personal and telephone interviews for the New Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The starting (trial) salary is \$8.85/hr with a mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.445/mile. The work hours are varied and flexible with paid training.

For further information, please contact Sarah Newick at 207-363-7536 or Yvon Lanoue at 802-744-6102.

NASDA is a Fair Opportunity Employer